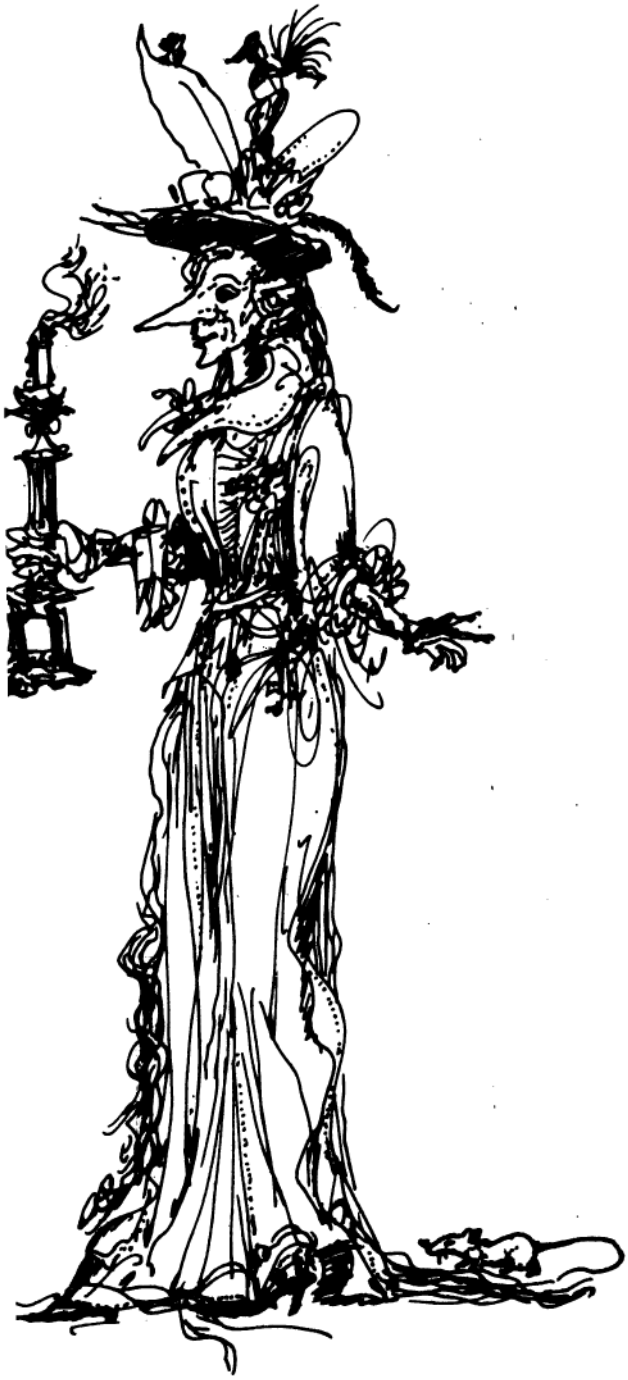
Folk-tales of the British Isles



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СОСТАВЛЕНИЕ И КОММЕНТАРИИ ДЖ. РИОРДАНА
ПРЕДИСЛОВИЕ Н. Г. ЕЛИНОЙ
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В сборнике представлены народные сказки различных регионов Британских островов. В приложение включены избранные переводы сказок на русский язык.

Издание включает предисловие и комментарии к текстам.

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Предисловие

СКАЗКА... С нее начинается знакомство с художественными творениями, которые выводят нас за пределы уже известного, привычного детского мирка. Самый общедоступный жанр, но именно он оказывается одним из наиболее загадочных в истории народного творчества. Как точно определить, что такое сказка, когда она возникла, как развивалась и распространялась, как сочетаются в ней межнациональные и национальные черты, как соотносится она с другими жанрами, устными и письменными, какая действительность в ней отразилась и какое сознание, какие идеалы она выражает? На все эти вопросы не так легко ответить. И немало ученых-исследователей изучало обширный материал, прежде чем пытаться их разрешить.

"Народные сказки Британских островов" – книга, составленная Джеймсом Риорданом, – не первое собрание британских сказок, которое увидит свет в нашей стране.

На русском языке уже выходили сборники "Английских народных сказок" (1957 г.) и "Шотландских народных сказок и преданий" (1967 г.). Первый сборник соответствует классическому собранию сказок Дж. Джейкобса (опубликованному в 1890 г.), он включает волшебные сказки, иногда с общеевропейским сюжетом, иногда навеянные балладами, сказки бытовые, комические и "детские" (особый, английский вид сказок). Второй сборник составлен из волшебных сказок и преданий, принадлежащих разным собраниям. Таких собраний, опирающихся частично на угасающую устную традицию, а в значительной мере на книжные источники, выходило в XX в. несколько[1]. Они не совпадают со сборником Джейкобса, так как включают, кроме сказок, предания, легенды, былички, которые в Англии начали записывать давно как иллюстрацию народных поверий, очень живучих и проникших в художественную литературу.

[1] См. библиографию к наст. изданию.

Сборник, составленный английским писателем и переводчиком Джеймсом Риорданом, занимает промежуточное место между научным изданием и обычным популярным. Главное отличие этой книги от других собраний в том, что составитель дал целостную и в то же время разнообразную картину британского сказочного фольклора, сгруппировав сказки не по жанровому, а по географическому признаку. Сказки заимствованы из различных книжных источников, на которые составитель ссылается в примечаниях. Строгого принципа заимствования нет: иногда текст сказки восходит к одному источнику, иногда к нескольким, составитель контаминирует их, руководствуясь эстетическими соображениями. Часть сказок дается целиком на диалекте, другая часть на общеанглийском языке, и, наконец, во многих сказках повествование от 3-го лица на общеанглийском сочетается с прямой речью на диалекте. Языковой выбор определяется не только источником сказки, но и стремлением составителя донести до читателей аромат устного творчества и в то же время не слишком затруднить его восприятие. Стиль же сказки в известной мере зависит от степени ее литературной обработки.

Сборник включает, в основном как зачины и концовки, образцы и устных поэтических жанров, – но главное место занимают, конечно, сказки.

Что же такое сказка? Иногда сказкой называют все виды фольклорной прозы, более точное определение основано на характерном ее признаке – вымышленности: анонимный сочинитель сказки сознательно создавал поэтический вымысел, и слушатели так и воспринимали его. Но и этого признака недостаточно. Сказка предполагает определенное видение мира, определенные типы сюжетов, действующих лиц, определенную четкую структуру, особую стилистическую форму повествования, то есть вполне развитую поэтику.

Когда же сложился этот жанр? Отдельные его элементы восходят к древнейшим временам родового строя, однако начал оформляться он позднее и достиг расцвета в эпоху феодализма. Медленное развитие сказочного жанра наложило свой отпечаток на содержание сказок – оно многослойно. Самый глубокий пласт – архаический: древнейшие обычаи, ритуальные обряды, мифологические представления, первобытное общинное сознание. Следующий пласт

свидетельствует о скачке в развитии образа мышления: мифы стали утрачивать свое священное значение, начали превращаться в рассказы: боги, то есть обожествленные силы природы, уступили место людям; община перестала быть целостной, герой в своих столкновениях с враждебными духами природы стал действовать в одиночку. И, наконец, верхний пласт проникнут социальными мотивами, которые постепенно усиливаются. Эта многослойность сказки указывает на особенность развития человеческого сознания, очень долго сохраняющего связь с прошлым и одновременно способного к резким скачкам.

Восходя к мифологическим представлениям, сказка не обязательно рождается непосредственно из мифов, она может возникнуть из краткого рассказа о необычайном происшествии, приключившемся с каким-нибудь членом общины и окрашенном его воображением. Реальность переплетается с фантастикой, и это переплетение – характернейшая черта сказки.

Действительно, если вчитаться даже в волшебную сказку, не говоря уже о бытовой, то можно обнаружить в ней черты реальной жизни. Прежде всего отражены общественные отношения: антагонизм между богатыми и бедными, и, в противовес этому, как желанная мечта, подчеркнуто неравные браки, разрушающие сословные перегородки (король женится на простой горожанке), семейные конфликты (мачеха выгоняет падчерицу, или младшие дети, излюбленные сказочные герои, оказываются обездоленными); действуют социально детерминированные персонажи: кроме королей, преобладают охотники, рыбаки, пастухи; в сказке получают измененное отражение древние обычаи, обряды, ритуальные действа: загадывание загадок жениху, произнесение обетов при рождении ребенка. Таким образом, в сказке воплощена не только общественно-бытовая сторона жизни людей в разные эпохи, но и их верования. Сильный отпечаток на содержание и сюжет сказок наложило представление о тотеме: чудесном животном – защитнике рода. Далекие отголоски тотемизма звучат в сказках о женах и мужьях в облике животных (*The Paddo*), а также в сказках, где в роли помощников героя действуют благородные животные (*The Wal at the World's End*). Большую роль в развитии сказочного сюжета играют всякого рода запреты, восходящие к древнему

понятию табу (*The Black Bull of Norroway*).

Наряду с этими архаическими верованиями, оставшимися в более поздние времена только как смутное, неосознанное воспоминание, в сказках выражены и другие поверья, более новые. Они вызвали к жизни целый ряд сказочных персонажей: драконов, великанов, эльфов, кобольдов, фей, русалок, всякого рода призраков и злых духов, не избежавших в странах Западной Европы известной христианизации, которая, однако, не подавила более архаичную мифологию. Фантастический мир этих существ органически связан в сказке с миром действительным: они равно вымышлены, подчиняются тем же законам, естественным и магическим, они лежат в одной плоскости, и между ними нет границы. В основе такого слияния лежит определенный тип мышления, не разделяющего человека и одухотворенную, персонифицированную природу, объективную реальность и реальность воображаемую, "магическую".

Сказочная фантастика не является, однако, простым переложением поверий, она создавалась и воображением анонимных творцов сказок, передававших их изустно один другому от поколения к поколению и соответственно изменявших их (отсюда многочисленные варианты одного и того же сюжета).

Творчество сказочников, как любых создателей искусства, предполагает не только отражение действительности, но и оценку ее, то есть выражает определенные этические суждения, идеалы той среды, к которой сказочники принадлежат. В сказках есть четкое понятие добра и зла, сталкивающихся между собой. Обычно сказка заканчивается победой добра, а точнее, торжеством справедливости: добро награждается, зло наказуется. Иногда в более поздних сказках справедливость приобретает социальный смысл: бедняк женится на принцессе, находит клад и т. д.

И хотя не всегда сказочная мораль столь прямолинейна, однако этический кодекс в сказках разных народов оказался довольно устойчивым, и в общем нравственные идеалы в них совпадают. Это можно объяснить общностью человеческой натуры и сходностью общественной жизни, проходящей те же стадии развития. Гораздо удивительнее совпадение не только частных мотивов, но и сюжетов и даже отдельных словесных формул. Объяснение, что все европейские сказки восходят к одному источнику – прародине

европейских народов Индии, вызывает серьезные возражения из-за своей узости (оно не касается сказок народов других континентов). Но и другое объяснение: сказки передаются от народа к народу и возникают так называемые "бродячие сюжеты" – тоже не вполне разрешает проблему. Действительно, на заре нашей эры целые народности переселялись из Азии в Европу, долго двигались по самой Европе, смешивались с местными жителями и передавали им сказки, услышанные в других землях. Интенсивное общение между народами продолжалось и позднее: мореплаватели и сухопутные путешественники – купцы и паломники, – кроме товаров и реликвий, везли с собой сказки, да и сами сказочники могли тоже свободно переходить с места на место. Но это все же не объясняет, почему так близко совпадают сюжеты в сказках народов, живущих на очень отдаленном расстоянии, и неясно – кто кому передал сюжет, кто был его творцом. Не совсем удовлетворяет и третье, уже упоминавшееся объяснение: близость сюжетов порождена сходностью общественной жизни людей и однородностью внутреннего процесса развития человека. Вряд ли оно настолько стереотипно, что проявилось в тех же особенностях сюжета и в тех же словесных формулах. В общем, в какой-то мере все эти гипотезы правомерны, но исчерпывающего ответа на основной вопрос пока нет.

Среди сказок, отобранных Риорданом, не менее восьми-девяти сказок могут быть отнесены по своим сюжетам к разряду общеевропейских. Среди них *Tops or Butts?*, *The Wee Bunnock* (ср. русские сказки "Мужик и медведь", "Колобок"), *The Three Sillies* (ср. русскую сказку "Лутонюшка", немецкую "Умная Эльза", норвежскую "Какие на свете женщины бывают" и др.), *The Servant Boy and the Farmer* (ср. французскую сказку "Пьер и Жан"), *The Paddo* (ср. немецкую и французскую сказку "Принц-жаба"), *The Wal at the Warld's End* (ср. французские сказки "Ослиная шкура" и "Дочь испанского короля" и норвежскую "Кари-замарашка"), *The Black Bull of Norroway* (ср. норвежскую сказку "На восток от солнца, на запад от луны"), сказки о горбунах (ср. соответствующие французскую и итальянскую), *Tom Tit Tot* (ср. немецкую сказку "Румпельштильцхен", французскую "Ропике" и исландскую "Гилитрутт").

Сходные сюжеты не означают, однако, одинакового содержания и окраски сказок. Даже в сказках близких друг к другу народов есть особые характерные черты. В значительной мере их определяет окружающая природа, сложившийся общественный быт и выработанное веками мироощущение. В северных странах природа представляется враждебнее, чем в южных, где ее раньше сумели "цивилизовать". Соответственно и духи у северян рисуются более страшными. В таких преимущественно крестьянских странах, как Норвегия, Исландия, рыцари в сказках почти не встречаются и понятие вассальной верности, столь важное для сказок немецких, здесь отсутствует. В германских и романских странах поверья различаются еще и в другом отношении. В Италии и Франции языческое выступает в них почти всегда в христианской оболочке, а в Норвегии, Швеции, Англии языческое уживается с христианским. Но и в скандинавских сказках христианизация проявляется неодинаково: в сказках Дании она дает себя знать гораздо ощутимее, чем в сказках ее соседей.

Различается и общая тональность сказок. В немецких, шведских сказках, где волшебство выступает на передний план, поражает сила воображения, французские сказки, менее архаичные, отличаются большей рационалистичностью, остроумием, легкой иронией. В итальянских сказках заметно стремление к красоте и гармонии. В английских – к юмору, смягчающему первоначальную жесткость общегерманских источников.

При сопоставлении сказки "Том-Тит-Тот", вошедшей в сборник, со сказками других народов на тот же сюжет эти различия выступают особенно рельефно. Схема сказки в разных национальных вариантах одна и та же. Волшебный помощник – демоническое, злое существо – выполняет за героиню ее работу, но требует, чтобы она угадала его имя; если она этого не сможет, он заберет либо ее, либо ее ребенка. Конец счастливый: героиня узнает имя и освобождается. Но при однотипной схеме обнаруживаются заметные расхождения. В немецкой сказке мельник хвастается перед королем, что его дочь – искусная пряха, превращает солому в золото. Жадный король готов жениться на девушке, но под страхом смерти приказывает ей раньше выполнить то, о чем говорил ее отец. Злой гном, спасший ее от смерти, приходит в назначенный срок за ее новорожденным ребен-

ком: таков был их уговор. Имя гнома узнает верный слуга. В этой сказке есть некоторые характерные черты. Отец неизвестно как знакомится с королем, неизвестно зачем перед ним похваляется. (Сказка в логическом обосновании не нуждается.) Девушка – невинная жертва отцовского хвастовства – обещает своего будущего ребенка демоническому существу – мотив достаточно распространенный. Верный слуга – типичная фигура немецкой сказки. В общем, это классическая волшебная сказка, где сплетаются разные мотивы, где участвуют определенные персонажи и действует свое сцепление событий. Во французской сказке "Ропике" героиня легко соглашается на условие дьявола, потому что он предлагает соткать ее пряжу бесплатно, и сама узнает его имя. Поступок ее имеет практическую причину, гном заменен дьяволом, фигурой гораздо более привычной для французских поверий, сказка в целом приближается к жанру коротких иронических повестушек – фаблио, где дьявола часто одурачивают, особенно женщины. В исландской сказке "Гилитрутт" героиня – крестьянка, нерадивая жена, которой лень работать. За нее прядет страшная великанша (скесса), а когда наступает время расплаты, женщина во всем кается мужу. Имя случайно узнает он и спасает таким образом жену, а она после этого исправляется. Эта сказка, где бытовая реальность перемешана с фантастикой и где явственно ощущается моралистический уклон, тяготеет к быличке.

Английская сказка "Том-Тит-Тот" по развитию сюжета ближе всего к немецкой, но другая завязка придает ей иную окраску. Героиня – обжора, съедает сразу пять паштетов, и ее мать, пораженная аппетитом дочери, складывает об этом песенку, а чтоб не позорить дочь перед королем, случайно услышавшим песенку, меняет слова: паштеты превращаются в мотки пряжи и обжорство – в трудолюбие, покоряющее сердце хозяйственного короля. Таким образом, начало сказки – комическое. Героиня – не невинная жертва, а девушка, наделенная смешным недостатком. Хвастовство матери – вынужденное, психологически оправданное, оно тоже производит комическое впечатление. Никаких дополнительных мотивов или действующих лиц в сказке нет. "Помощнику" нужен не ребенок, а сама королева, а имя его узнает не слуга, а король, который держится гораздо проще, чем его немецкий собрат: разгу-

ливает по улице, слушает, что поют в домах; привлекает его не золото, а трудолюбие девушки, перед концом ее "испытательного срока" он мирно приходит к ней поухаживать. "Помощник" тоже не так страшен: видевший его король говорит, что он смешной-пресмешной. Так волшебная сказка, приобретая комический оттенок, сближается с бытовой, фантастика сочетается с юмором – характерной чертой национального склада англичан.

Свой отпечаток на сказки кладет не только широкая сфера их бытования – в нашем сборнике это Британские острова, – но даже отдельные местности, не говоря уже об областях, имеющих свою собственную историю, как Шотландия, или о странах, вернувших себе национальную независимость и обладающих собственной культурной традицией, как Ирландия. Риордан, подразделивший свое собрание по географическому принципу, выявил это весьма наглядно. Мы замечаем, что в Юго-Восточной и Средней Англии выделяются бытовые комические сказки, в кельтском Уэльсе преобладают волшебные легенды и сказки об эльфах и русалках, в Восточной Англии предпочтение отдается призракам, в Шотландии сохранились более архаичные сказки (о волшебных метаморфозах животных), в Ирландии сильнее выражено влияние христианства, усилена демоничность.

Национальная специфика влияет и на поэтику сказок, но в общих чертах (особенно на Европейском континенте) она по своему типу едина.

Борьба добра и зла и вера в победу справедливости определили счастливый конец подавляющего большинства сказок и развитие сюжета: герою приходится преодолевать целый ряд испытаний, прежде чем он обретет счастье. Соответственно эпизод нанизывается на эпизод, нагнетается множество повторов, благодаря чему происходит усиление действия, приводящее к кульминации и к развязке. Но каждый эпизод имеет и самостоятельное значение. Для сказочника и его слушателей важно и интересно любое событие и приключение. За этим скрывается особое восприятие, для которого мир, с одной стороны, нерасторжимая целостность, а с другой – расчленен на отдельные самоценные явления и предметы.

Строгая последовательность событий создает особое сказочное время. Из реального времени сказки выключе-

ны. Об этом свидетельствует формула, с которой они начинаются: "Жили-были". Эта формула, дополненная иногда формулой финальной: "Они живы до сих пор, если не умерли", подчеркивает вневременной характер сказки и отсутствие стремления к внешней достоверности. Недостоверность повествования подчеркивается и неопределенностью места действия. Сказочный мир оказывается замкнутым в себе. С миром слушателей его связывают обращения сказочника, тоже облеченные в устоявшиеся формулы, и традиционность представлений. Слушатели привыкли, что лес в сказке должен быть темным, дворец хрустальным, королевна прекрасной. Эти повторяющиеся определения заменяли пространные описания внешности персонажей и окружающей природы, их дополняло воображение слушателей. Сказочный мир обрисован четко, лаконично, однолинейно, полутонов нет, красок немного, они контрастные (борются темные и светлые силы), яркие, и в общем преобладает светлый колорит. На первый взгляд изображение кажется плоскостным, но в нем есть своя глубина. Она достигается за счет символики. Отдельные фигуры, предметы, числа кроме прямого значения имеют еще и символическое: дракон не только чудище, но и воплощение враждебной природной стихии, кольцо — символ верности, цветы — юности, добродетели, определенные числа имеют магические свойства.

Символика, основанная на представлении о непосредственной связанности мира материального и духовного, заменяет в какой-то мере раскрытие внутреннего состояния героев. Оно показано только отраженно, через их действия, которые главным образом и занимают слушателей. Индивидуальности сказочные герои лишены, они различаются лишь по типу: великодушные, благородные смельчаки (подчеркнуты нравственные качества), находчивые умники и, чаще, удачливые дураки (на первом плане — умственные способности) и, наконец, люди без характерных черт, случайно попавшие в необычайную ситуацию.

Все эти типы героев с известными отклонениями встречаются в сказках, разных по своему характеру, тематике и форме.

По тематике сказки принято делить на волшебные, бытовые и сказки о животных. Однако сказки отличаются не только по тематике, но по содержанию и по форме. Есть

сказки сложные, и есть сказки-анекдоты, где сюжет сведен к минимуму. Есть сказки, где нет основного признака сказочного сюжета – счастливого конца, иногда он возвращает героя к исходной ситуации, а иногда оказывается просто дурным.

Сами границы сказочного жанра не вполне ясны. Сказка соприкасается, с одной стороны, с устными "былями" разного рода, с другой – с городскими рассказами: шванками, фаблио и новеллами, быстро превратившимися в жанры письменной литературы.

Классических образцов волшебной сказки в сборнике всего три, и все шотландские: *The Black Bull of Norroway*, *The Paddo* и *The Wal at the World's End*. Они, как уже указывалось, имеют параллели в сказочном фольклоре других народов. Во всех трех сказках есть далекие отголоски тотемизма: в одном случае принц выступает в обличье быка, в другом – в обличье жабы, герои освобождаются от злых чар и превращаются в людей, в третьем случае волшебным помощником оказывается пони. В первой сказке действует запрет (табу), который героиня нарушает. Во всех трех сказках волшебство входит в реальность совершенно органично, никакой грани между ними нет. Нет реального времени, начинаются сказки со слов: "давным-давно", "однажды", "жил когда-то...", заканчиваются две из них обычной формулой: "и насколько я знаю, они живут счастливо до сего дня", "они жили счастливо до самой своей смерти". Место действия тоже фактически не обозначено. Хотя в первой сказке и указывается, что героиня жила в Норвегии, но дальше действие переносится в какую-то неизвестную сказочную страну, где стоят прекрасные замки и высится стеклянная гора.

Во второй сказке место действия вообще не упоминается, а в третьей королевна отправляется на край света – географическое понятие довольно неопределенное. Во всех трех сказках главные действующие лица – женщины, в первой – младшая дочь, в третьей – падчерица, излюбленные героини сказочного жанра. В повествовании подчеркиваются их нравственные достоинства: стойкость и преданность в любви, сострадание к более слабым. Все три героини, включая строптивую девицу из второй сказки, проходят через испытания и обретают счастье. Наиболее типична структура первой сказки, где заметны разные мотивы:

волшебное превращение героя, нарушение запрета, появление подставной невесты, – где есть волшебные помощники – дарители – и злобная соперница, где строго соблюдается закон тройственности: трижды повторяется та же ситуация и трижды повторяются те же словесные формулы, – и каждый отдельный эпизод полностью завершен. Другие волшебные сказки нашего сборника нельзя отнести к разряду классических.

Сказка "Дракон из Лайминстера" (*The Knucker of Lyminster*) по содержанию вполне традиционна: крестьянский парень хитростью побеждает дракона. В ней усилен комический момент: дракон не только скот таскает, но и в чужие окна подглядывает, он обжора, съедает неудобоваримый пудинг, – и это несколько меняет звучание сказки. Но отступление от канона не в этом. Здесь появляется реалистически очерченная фигура сказочника, который не только называет имя дракона, имя и фамилию его победителя, фамилию человека, наградившего его за подвиг, но и ссылается на собственную тетку, будто бы знавшую потомков героя, а в эпилоге указывает его могилу. Все эти детали придают рассказу внешнюю достоверность, которая контрастирует с фантастическим содержанием.

Целый ряд волшебных сказок сборника еще дальше от привычной, устоявшейся структуры. Они фактически являются смешанным жанром, так как граничат с "былями", то есть с преданиями, легендами, быличками. Основное отличие этих жанров в том, что рассказчики хотят уверить слушателей (и сами большей частью верят), будто повествуют не о вымысле, а о действительных событиях. На художественность своего рассказа они обращают меньше внимания, чем сказочники, создававшие законченную поэтическую форму. События, о которых идет речь в "былях", имеют либо историческую, либо религиозно-христианскую, либо мифолого-языческую основу. Наиболее далеки от сказки предания, так как они восходят к каким-то часто не очень значительным, но реальным фактам прошлого.

Таким единственным в сборнике преданием является рассказ о "ведьме" Матушке Шиптон, жившей в XVI в. и прославившейся своими предсказаниями. Ведьма – существо двойственное: ее наделяли сверхъестественной силой, но приписывали эту силу реальным женщинам, кото-

рые почему-либо внушали подозрения. Поэтому ведьма могла фигурировать и в сказке, и в предании. Сказочных элементов в этой "были", кроме фантастических предсказаний, нет. Суховатое изложение фактов напоминает старинную хронику.

В других сказках сборника ощущается влияние легенд. Этот жанр ближе к сказкам, хотя тоже претендует на достоверность. Обычно легенды связаны с определенным местом и определенным лицом – часто святым или, наоборот, грешником. В них есть своя фантастика, и их структура в известной мере напоминает сказочную: иногда один, а чаще цепь законченных эпизодов показывают испытания героя, которые завершаются по-разному – в зависимости от его личности. Однако главное, существенное различие между этими двумя жанрами – разное мироощущение: иногда открыто, иногда подспудно религиозное (хотя и необязательно христианское), которое преобладает в легендах, и арелигиозное в сказке.

Образцом классической легенды может служить "Затонувший город на дне озера Ллин-Бала" (*The Sunken City of Llyn Bala*) – сюжет широко распространенный. Город ушел под воду за грехи правителя. В легенде заключен преображенный социальный момент, подчеркнутый контрастом между жестоким правителем и бедным, чистым душой арфистом. Таких контрастов сказка не знает.

Глубинный религиозный подтекст может определить несчастливый конец сказочных историй, близких к легендам: герой своевольно выходит за грань дозволенного, проникает в чуждую человеку стихию, и это приносит ему беду или приводит к гибели. Между природой и человеком исчезает всякое единение, она ему противостоит, ее духи ему враждебны, животные живут своей жизнью и перестают быть его покровителями. В шотландской сказке "Жена-тюленииха" (*The Selkie Wife*) распространенный в разных вариантах, европейских и неевропейских, сюжет восходит к тотемистическим представлениям: герой женится на девушке, которая сбрасывает обличье животного или птицы и становится юной красавицей. Обычно в сказках этого типа возникает драматический конфликт: жена находит свое одеяние, спрятанное мужем, и покидает его. Но конец благополучный: она возвращается к нему. В нашей же сказке жена навсегда уходит в море. Сказка заканчивается

поэтизацией детей вольной морской стихии, которых не может удержать земля.

Еще трагичнее кончаются сказки о Деве озера (*The Lady of Llyn y Fan Fach*) и русалке (*Lutey and the Merry-maid*). Первая уэльская сказка еще сохраняет сказочную структуру – крестьянин женится на Деве озера, она рожает ему трех сыновей, но он трижды нарушает наложенный на него запрет, и она уходит от него, а он – здесь логика сказочного сюжета уступает место легенде – бросается вслед за ней в озеро. Черты легенды проступают и во вступлении, где точно обозначено место действия, и в эпилоге, где сообщается о потомках Девы.

Вторая корнуольская сказка о рыбаке и русалке еще дальше от классической модели. Правда, русалка дарит рыбаку волшебный гребень и выполняет три его желания, но на первый план выступает мотив греховной роковой любви женатого рыбака к коварной морской обольстительнице. Не совсем обычно развивается и действие сказки: после напряженного эпизода первой встречи рыбака с русалкой, их длинного диалога и борьбы, кончившейся тем, что русалке приходится отступить, повествование о последующей жизни рыбака становится спокойным и сжатым. Тем драматичнее последняя сцена: когда лунной ночью через девять лет русалка вновь появляется перед рыбаком, он произносит одну лишь фразу: "Пришел мой час" – и бросается в море. Эта развязка, эпилог, почти совпадающий с эпилогом уэльской сказки, вступление, где указано не только место, но и время действия, уже определенно превращают сказку в легенду.

Герои этих полусказок-полулегенд не похожи на сказочных: ими движет любовная страсть и ей подчинены все их поступки. Волшебные существа, фигурирующие в легендах, тоже несколько иные, чем в сказках, которые редко заимствуют их непосредственно из имевших широкое хождение поверий, ощущавшихся как нечто реальное и потому не вполне соответствующее вымышленному миру сказки.

Поверья легли в основу другого близкого к сказкам жанра – быличек.

Быличками называют короткие одноэпизодные рассказы о необычайных происшествиях – встрече со сверхъестественным существом, фигурирующим в поверьях, – приклю-

чившихся будто бы с рассказчиком либо с человеком, которого он или лично знает, или слышал о нем. Когда возникли эти рассказы? Истоки их теряются в глубине веков. Как жанр они, вероятно, старше сказки, и вполне возможно, что послужили ее основой. Парадокс заключается в том, что этот жанр легче модернизируется, чем сказочный, и потому отдельные рассказы возникают в более поздние времена и оказываются моложе сказок. Былички не однотипны: среди них различаются импровизированные рассказы о непосредственных личных переживаниях, порожденных поверьями, и рассказы, ставшие уже традиционными, стилистически оформленными, подвергшимися художественной обработке, хотя и не столь совершенной, как в сказках. Со сказками их сближает тематика, пристрастие к фантастике, иногда совпадают содержание и действующие лица. Но есть и существенные отличия.

Прежде всего различен уровень сознания. В сказке, как уже говорилось, реальный мир и сверхъестественный не отделены, в быличке, как и в легенде, между ними четкая граница. В реальном ее мире точно обозначено место и время действия. Они исчезают, когда герой попадает в мир волшебства: он не знает, сколько времени он пробыл в этом мире, и зачастую не может сказать, как он велик, или указать туда дорогу. Это двоемирие, осознанное нарушение естественных условий бытия создает совсем другую атмосферу, чем в сказке: возникает ощущение неверности, опасности, далеко не всегда герою удается одолеть враждебных духов природы, которых в быличке больше, чем в сказке. Опасливое, отрицательное отношение к сверхъестественным существам, возникшее еще в отдаленные времена, впоследствии, когда былички модернизировались, стало определяться влиянием христианства.

Иному видению мира соответствует и другое его изображение. Реальная действительность очерчена конкретно: герой живет в деревне, у него есть соседи, семья. С другой стороны, картина фантастического мира в быличке в гораздо большей степени отражает поверья, чем сказка. Иной, чем в сказках, и характер повествования. Действие ограниченно: герой не странствует, не ищет приключений, столкновение со сверхъестественными силами происходит как бы случайно, в его повседневной жизни. Структура проще: в центре один основной эпизод. Развитие простого,

не устоявшегося сюжета протекает быстро, интенсивно, его развязка часто трагическая: герой умирает или сходит с ума. Быличка драматична, нет замедляющих действие эпических повторов. Стиль скупой, лаконичный, четкий, отшлифованных формул нет, хотя более или менее единообразный зачин намечен. Этот менее каноничный, чем сказка, жанр благодаря конкретности изображения, точному обозначению места действия имеет отчетливую локальную окраску, которую усиливают и вызвавшие его к жизни поверья, тоже носящие региональный характер. В Британии это поверья о феях и эльфах.

Происхождение этих мифологических существ довольно сложное. По-видимому, они произошли от смешения кельтских божеств и природных духов, карликов германских племен. Христианство наложило на образ этих духов, как и на образ русалок, некоторый отпечаток, но все же они не превратились в духов зла, а остались творениями промежуточными между раем и адом. Их связь с адом усиливается в зависимости от влияния христианства, особенно это заметно в пуританскую эпоху, когда их стали сближать с ведьмами. Но в общем преобладало представление, что облик у них человеческий, рост колеблется от нормального до маленького, детского, иногда даже крошечного, а характер довольно сложный. Они лукавы и проказливы; чаще жестоки, но иногда добросердечны; очень обидчивы и мстительны, но иногда проявляют благодарность; обладают эстетическим чувством: любят пляски и музыку; почитают целомудрие и супружескую верность, но в то же время прельщают смертных, увлекая их в свое царство; крадут детей и подсовывают вместо них своих собственных; похищают также повивальных бабок и кормилиц для своих младенцев; воруют зерно у крестьян, а иногда, наоборот, помогают собирать урожай и молотить. Живут они в холмах и горных пещерах. Среди них есть феи, походящие на знатных дам, и маленькие старушки-пряхи, рыцари и ребячливые человечки, знающие крестьянский труд и требующие в уплату сливки и сыр.

Рассказы о феях и эльфах принимают разную окраску в зависимости от того, какие именно поверья легли в их основу и какие феи в них действуют. Молодая крестьянская девушка Черри из Зеннора (из одноименной сказки) поступает в услужение в дом эльфа нянчить его ребенка.

Исходная ситуация – встреча на большой дороге с эльфом, которого она принимает за благородного дворянина, – требует дальнейшего развития. Следует долгое путешествие, описание волшебного дома и его обитателей, запреты, которые Черри нарушает, ее изгнание и возвращение домой. В общем, выдерживается сказочная структура, которая сохраняется и в других сказках, где эльфы предлагают женщинам нянчить их детей (сказка "Волшебная мазь" – *The Magic Ointment* – и др.). Только концовка в сказке о Черри особая, поэтичная: девушка влюбилась в эльфа и всю жизнь ждет его.

В ирландской сказке "Тейг О'Кейн и мертвец" (*Teig O'Kane and the Corpse*) структура тоже сказочная: разгульный сын фермера встречается с эльфами, которые несут гроб с мертвецом. В наказание за грехи они заставляют Тейга тащить этот гроб на далекое кладбище и там похоронить. Страшные приключения Тейга составляют целую цепочку эпизодов и завершаются благополучно. Моралистическая тенденция: распутный Тейг исправляется, женится и обретает счастье – вносит в сказку оттенок легенды.

Гораздо ближе к легенде или к быличке ланкаширская сказка "Похоронное шествие эльфов" (*The Fairy Funeral*). Географически точно обозначено, где обычно встречались феи, и довольно точно время действия ("пятьдесят-шестьдесят лет тому назад"), один из персонажей – крестьянин, другой – ветеринар, имена их названы, подробно описано кладбище, по которому они ночью проходят и где видят похоронное шествие эльфов, предсказывающее смерть одному из них. В сказке всего один эпизод страшной встречи и эпилог – смерть того, кому она была предсказана. И, наконец, восточноанглийская сказка "Как избавиться от фей" (*A Cure for a Fairy*) – в которой поверье показано в смешном свете: браконьер стреляет солью в одну из фей, собравшихся на кладбище, – представляет собой настоящую быличку.

Среди быличек выделяется история об эльфах, живущих в чашечках тюльпанов, и их долгом дружеском общении со старушкой – владелицей сада ("Тюльпанные эльфы" – *The Tulip Pixies*). Стиль этой истории, поэтичный, лирический, напоминает сказки Андерсена (может быть, она подверглась обработке?), отличается от обычной сжатой и суховатой манеры рассказов этого жанра.

Наряду с эльфами в крестьянской мифологии фигурируют и другие природные и домовые духи, менее красивые и изящные, чем русалки и эльфы: водяные, лешие, оборотни, домовые. В классических европейских сказках они вообще не появляются, зато быличек и фантастических рассказов о них сложено много. Речные духи большей частью невидимы и очень опасны. В совершенно реальной бытовой обстановке, на кухне крестьянского дома, вдруг слышится таинственный зов "Джан Ку!", мальчик-батрак (из одноименного рассказа) всю зиму слышит этот зов и в конце концов не выдерживает, спускается к реке и... исчезает. Обманом затягивают к себе в омут водяные духи девочку-пастушку ("Никессенский омут" – *Nikessen's Pool*), и только любовь матери спасает ее. Быличка здесь разрослась и превратилась в довольно длинный фантастический рассказ, где главные персонажи – отец, мать, девочка – наделены определенными характерами. Иногда водяные духи покровительствуют людям, но могут рассердиться, и тогда их нужно умилостивить. Это представление легло в основу местной линкольнширской легенды "Маленький человечек" (*Tiddy Mun*). В реалистической новелле о старом и молодом пастухе и их взаимоотношениях ("Блуждающий огонек" – *Jacky-my-Lantern*) тоже появляется местный дух – блуждающий болотный огонь, который по-своему помогает старику за миску овсянки научить молодого уму-разуму. Этот бытовой комический момент свидетельствует, что к поверьям не всегда относятся вполне серьезно. Особенно это заметно в быличках "Оборотень из Грессингтона" (*The Bargest of Grassington*) и "Коровий оборотень" (*The Hedley Kow*). В первой звучит распространенный мотив: оборотень испугался жены героя-рассказчика, повстречавшего его. Во второй с большим юмором очерчены два персонажа: старушка Гуди Блейк и озорник оборотень с его лукавыми проделками. Гуди Блейк – прямая противоположность всегда недовольным сказочным героиням, типа старухи из "Сказки о рыбаке и рыбке". Хотя ее находка изменяется каждый раз в худшую сторону, она видит в таких превращениях особую удачу и очень забавно это обосновывает. Повторяющаяся ситуация, хотя и перевернутая по сравнению со сказками (исключение составляют сказки о нелепых обменах), все же приближает быличку к сказочному жанру. Зато рассказы о домовых ("Домо-

вые и соляница" – *The Boogies an' the Salt-Box*; "Старая Нэнси и серебряная монета" – *Old Nancy and the Silver Token*) за пределы быличек не выходят, более сказочны лишь забавные ирландские рассказы о маленьких башмачниках – хранителях кладов ("Мэри Хоган и лепрехаун" – *Mary Hogan's Leprechaun*; "Том Фитцпатрик и лепрехаун" – *Tom Fitzpatrick and the Leprechaun*).

Кроме природных духов, в английском фольклоре важную роль играют призраки, мертвецы, вернувшиеся на землю. Вера в них тоже восходит к очень отдаленным временам, христианство, создавшее более четкую картину загробного мира, только несколько "модернизировало" их в соответствии со своими догмами. Рассказы о призраках, входящие в сборник, тоже разные – серьезные и комические, в соответствии с двойственным отношением к поверьям, о котором уже упоминалось. Страшные призраки, грозящие смертью тем, кто с ними столкнется, встают в рассказах "Женщина без головы" (*The Headless Woman*) и "Привидение из Эллен Пот" (*The Boggart of Hellen Pot*). Это местные легенды с отпечатком христианизации. Совсем в другом роде – полукомический-полуфантастический современный рассказ "Духи в Фэне" (*Ghosts in the Fen*), где рассказчик развлекает слушателей небылицами и дурачит образованного столичного жителя. Высмеивается старинное поверье и в бытовом рассказе "Как приходил дух старой Полли" (*How Oud Polly Gorst Cum Agin*). Особое место в ряду этих рассказов занимает новелла "Мэри, которая ничего не боялась" (*Mary Who Were Afeard O' Nothin'*) – в ней частично сохраняется сказочная структура (героиня проходит через разные испытания) и создается особое смешение юмора и фантастики: Мэри сначала встречается с поддельным призраком, а затем с настоящим и ведет себя с ними обоими одинаково свободно и естественно, как с обыкновенными, живыми людьми. Прозаический эпилог сказки выдержан в духе бытового рассказа или новеллы.

Принципиальное отличие новеллы от сказки состоит в том, что в новеллах нет фантастики (или она высмеивается), социальные отношения показаны в прямой, неиносказательной форме, повествование имеет определенное ядро – центральный эпизод, развязка выделена четко и часто оказывается неожиданной. Элементы сказки проникали в эти письменные рассказы, но было и обратное влияние.

Оно ощущается, как мы видели, и в волшебных сказках, но особенно в бытовых.

Бытовые сказки, вошедшие в сборник, неоднородны. В сказке "Сколько стоит кружка ума?" (*A Potlle o' Brains*) действует один из любимых сказочных героев – добродушный простачок. Исходная комическая ситуация – герой идет к вещунье покупать кружку ума – трижды повторяется и граничит с гротеском: из-за своей глупости герой мог бы совершить кощунство и преступление. Мотив нелепых действий и мыслей дурака связан с другими мотивами: загадыванием загадок и возникновением любовного чувства. Конец сказки вдвойне счастливый: Питер нашел себе умную жену, которая его полюбила и думает за него, и она разгадала загадки вещуньи.

Другие сказки о дураках отличаются от этой и по своему строению, и по отношению к главным персонажам. Сказки о "Готтемских умниках" (*The Wise Men of Gotham*) связаны с определенным местом (такого рода рассказы о жителях какого-нибудь определенного городка есть и у других народов), что придает им оттенок достоверности. Что касается персонажей, то они однолинейны – воплощают глупость и подвергаются осмеянию. По сути своей эти сказки – старинные, средневековые анекдоты. К такой же анекдотической форме тяготеет и сказка "Лошадиное яйцо" (*The Mare's Egg*) о глупых лондонцах и хитром крестьянине из Эссекса, который их одурачил. Три другие бытовые сказки "Воронье пугало" (*The Flaycrow*), "Тикающая лягушка" (*The Clicking Toad*), "Батрак и фермер" (*The Servant Boy and the Farmer*) непосредственно граничат с новеллами. В первых двух персонажи оказываются в смешном положении из-за обычных сельских суеверий, которые таким образом тоже высмеиваются. В третьей сказке элемент фантастики вообще отсутствует. Невыполнимые задачи (постоянный сказочный мотив), которые фермер предлагает своему батраку, тот выполняет не с помощью волшебных помощников, а благодаря своей находчивости и выигрывает сказочное игровое состязание благодаря своей выдержке. В этой ирландской сказке очень силен социальный момент: подчеркнута жадность и нечестность богатого фермера и тяжелое положение терпеливого и трудолюбивого батрака. В сказке два зачина: чисто сказочный, обычное обращение рассказчика "Давным-давно...

в стародавние времена... Живи я тогда, меня бы сейчас здесь не было..." и вполне реалистический: "Сыновья и дочери бедных фермеров и землепашцев и здешние батраки частенько уходили в графство Лимерик и нанимались там в батраки и служанки...". Сказка прямо перерастает в новеллу. Так происходит смешение жанров.

Мы видим, как многоцветна панорама сказок, собранных Дж. Риорданом. Разнообразны их тематика и персонажи: сверхъестественные существа и главные герои – люди. В подавляющем большинстве это крестьяне-землепашцы, встречаются пастухи, батраки, служанки на ферме и в поместье, рыбаки, ремесленники, коробейники, изредка – богатые землевладельцы; короли и знатные дворяне появляются лишь два-три раза. Все эти персонажи не отправляются в дальние странствия, место действия, как правило, строго ограничено деревней, ее окрестностями, ближайшим городком. Не совершают они, за редким исключением, особых подвигов, лучшие их качества – находчивость, стойкость, честность, сострадание и трудолюбие. Но они переживают самые разные приключения и по-разному себя ведут. Намечается некоторая индивидуализация характеров, не совпадающих с установившимися сказочными типами. Изменчив и общий колорит повествования: одни сказки овеяны лиризмом, другие проникнуты мягким, живым юмором. В целом же все эти сказки раскрывают перед нами уже ушедший в прошлое мир британского крестьянства, его образ мышления, его творчество, которое не стареет, как всякое истинное искусство.

Н. Елина

Folk-tales of the British Isles

The West Country

SKILLYWIDDEN

E 'aven't got many giants about our Zummerzet, I 'ear, but we 'ave one down to Dunster. Ah! Come up from Cornwall, 'e did, and 'e didn't like staying in Deven, 'cos 'is cousins there were a bit rough like. 'E come up to Exmoor, nice peaceful friendly place it is. But the folk on Exmoor, they didn't like size of 'im; bit scared they was. But then they found out that there wasn't no sheepstealers round about, cattle and sheep was thriving, and 'e didn't 'arm no one. They got quite fond of 'im. And then farmers' wives they began to put their heads together.

'Whatever did the poor girt veller veed on?'

Well, I think they was all quite ready to go and cook a dinner for 'im, but they found they needn't. You see, word come up from Yarnton as 'e were fond o' fish; 'e did take and wade out down channel, right out to sea, and all the fishing boats 'ad to do was to follow 'en. Oh! They come out o' Minehead 'arbor, loaded, they did, all the fishing boats, right up Bristol way, to Portishead, and 'e'd go and 'e'd wade out there, and water'd come up to 'is armpits, and 'e'd scoop up girt shoals o' fish, and 'twas a wonderful time for the fishing boats.

Well now, one time, old 'Lijah Crowcombe and 'is crew from the 'Dorcas Jane,' they'd managed to catch up. Oh! She were a leaky old craft were the 'Dorcas Jane,' and they was loaded right up and 'er were a-wallowing in the waves when a storm comes up. Well, all craft ran for it, and they thought they were going down to bottom, when through the storm, and all the wind and the mist, old Giant Skillywidden comes a-striding, and 'e picks up 'Dorcas Jane,' and afore they could say 'Thank 'ee,' 'e puts 'er down quiet and safe-like, in Watchett 'arbor. Then off and away 'e go, back to Dunster.

Well, Dunster folk got quite fond o' 'im arter that, and they'd wait to wave to 'en when 'en came back from the sea. 'E come up along by the river, and 'e'd sit on the 'ill, with 'is legs on either side o' the castle, and wash the mud off 'is legs in the River Laune. Then off and away 'e'd go, on up the 'ill, and folks used to look out of their windows to wave to 'en, and 'e'd wave back, and there was all the week's washing—dried!

Well now, old Giant Skillywidden, 'e were very 'appy to Exmoor, and then Old Nick, 'e decided 'e'd better come back. 'E didn't like seeing they little thatched churches going up all over the way. So when the folk of 'Awkridge thought they'd build theirselves a church, eight hundred feet up 'tis, the Old Man didn't like it, and then 'e found giant were 'elping. Ah! So Old Nicky, 'e tried to trip giant up. Skillywidden were coming across by Spire Cross, wi' a load o' girt stones, and 'e tripped, and they went all abroad.

Well, giant didn't say nothing, 'e didn't lose 'is temper, as Old Nicky 'oped 'e would, and cause a storm. No, 'e just patiently bent, and 'e pick 'em up, one arter another, and 'e put 'em up on 'Awkridge for church. And then 'e came to a girt broken one, and 'e tossed 'en aside into the very wood where the Old Boy were a-sitting, chuckling, and that made 'en go off in a hurry.

And 'e picks up the rest of the stones, as weren't no good for church, and 'e laid 'en across the stream, the River Barle it is, and there 'e made Tarr Steps.

Arter that old Skillywidden, 'e made up 'is mind as

there wasn't room for 'e and Old Nicky up on moor, and Old Nicky, 'e just about made up 'is mind the same. Now you see, the giant, 'e liked St. Dubricius and all they little churches, so 'e and Old Nicky, they got together, Porlock way, and they said they'd have a competition like. They'd each throw a big stone from Bossington Beacon over to Porlock Common, that be four miles, and 'ooever lost 'ud 'ave to leave the place for good and all.

Well, Old Nick 'ad first throw and 'is stone, 'e flew out over the four mile, and 'e landed up on Porlock Common. Then came our old giant: afore Old Nick could do anything, giant 'ad picked up 'is stone, and throwed right over to Battlegore, six miles away.

Old Nicky were dancing wi' rage, that the giant's was the furthest off.

'Now,' says Skillywidden, '*Guare wheag yw guare teag*; Fair play is good play: 'tis your promise to go away from round here, and never come back no more. But as no one don't trust you, I'll make sure.'

And 'e pick up Old Nicky by 'is tail, and 'e wade out down the Severn Channel, till 'e were right out to the sea, 'twere up to 'is armpits. And then 'e give 'im a good swing, three times round 'is head, and let go.

Well, I reckon the Old Un landed somewhere about the West Indies; anyway, 'e get a good long swim back.

'E's back o' course, but 'e don't shew 'isself in Zummerzet, 'case the giant be about.

* * *

The Cornish drolls are dead, each one;
The fairies from their haunts have gone;
There's scarce a witch in all the land,
The world has grown so learn'd and grand.

THE TULIP PIXIES

DOWN in the West, somewhere by the borders of the Tavy, there once lived a kind old woman. Her cottage was near a pixie field, where green rings stood in the grass. Now some folk say those fairy rings are caused by the elves catching colts. They catch them and ride them round and round by night, such folk do say. But this old woman had other ideas about her fairy rings.

Around her tidy cottage was a pretty garden, full of sweet-smelling flowers. Lavender and hollyhocks grew there, lilies and rosemary and the sweetbriar tree, blue-buttons and gillyflowers, forget-me-nots and rue. But best of all was a big bed of tulips which she tended with special care. Everyone stopped to peep over her gate when the time of tulips came.

How the pixies loved this spot. They liked the kind old woman, and they liked her garden too.

One starry night, as she lay asleep, with the lilac flowers showing white under her window, she was awakened by a strange sound. At first she thought an owl in the elm-tree had wakened her, but gradually she

realised that it was a sweeter sound than the crack of the churn owl.

'It du sound for all the world like a lullaby,' she thought, and lay listening for a while.

Then she got out of bed and peered from the window. There below her in the moonlight all the tulips in their shining colours were waving their heads in tune with the sweet music. It seemed as though they themselves were singing too.

Now when this happened the next night, and the next, the old woman began to understand what had happened. The pixie folk had brought their babies to the tulip bed, and laid each one within a separate flower.

'They be lullin' their babies to sleep, I du declare,' said the old woman, delighted. 'Ssh! Ess, dear soul. I see them now. The pixie babies are fast asleep, and there go the pixie folk themselves to dance in the meadow grass.'

She was right. It was not the catching of colts that made those rings on the green grass, but the dancing of the little folk to their own pipers' tune. But as the first dawn light broke pale in the east back came the pixies to claim their babies from the tulip cradles, where they lay asleep. And, all invisible now, they vanished clean away.

'Bless my soul! If the li'l dears b'aint a-kissin' their babies 'fore they pick'n up,' said the old woman. 'What lovin' folks they be! '

She noticed that the tulips did not fade so quickly as the other flowers in the garden. Indeed, it seemed as though they would never wither. And one day, as she bent to have a look at them, the old woman noticed that the pixies had made them even lovelier by breathing over them. Now they smelled as fragrant as lilies or roses do.

'No-one shall pick a single tulip, not even myself,' she said. 'They shall be kept altogether for the piskies' own delight.'

And so it was as year succeeded year.

But no-one lives forever, and at last the old woman died. It was a sad day for the garden, and the tulips

hung their heads. Well they might, for presently the garden passed into other hands. The new tenant cared nothing for pixie lore. He only cared for the garden at all because of its trees of fruit. Gooseberries and raspberries and greengage-plums made very tasty pies!

'Yu shouldn't be gatherin' they gooseberries out of season,' a neighbour warned him; "tis proper unlucky. The piskies can't abide bein' robbed of their own.'

'Piskies? Pah! ' said the man.

'Surely ye b'aint a-digging up they tulips?' said another. "Twas the old woman's special delight thaccy bed o' flowers. What be yu puttin' in?'

'I be settin' a bed of parsley, if you must know,' said the man.

'Parsley? Dear soul alive! Doan'ee know 'tis mortal unlucky to set a parsley bed. Last man as ever I heard of was bedridden ever after.'

'Stuff and nonsense! ' snapped the new tenant disbelievingly.

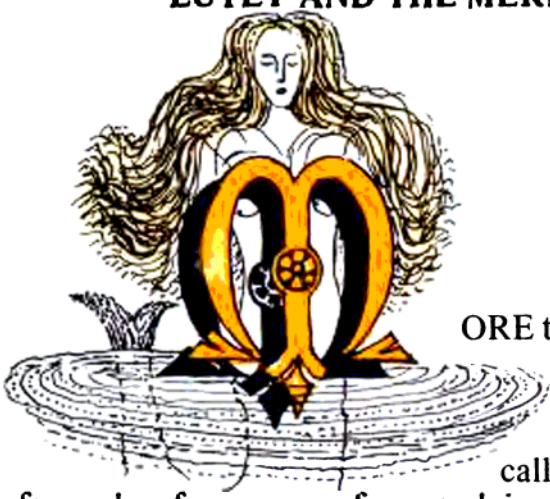
So the enchanted flowers were rooted up, and parsley set instead. But so offended were the pixies that they caused it to wither away. Not only would nothing grow in the gay tulip bed, but the whole garden was soon a waste.

Yet though the lullabies were heard no more from the tulip bed, singing still came from the little folk who dwelt in the neighbourhood. But this time the singing came from the old woman's grave. Sad and sorrowful was the song the pixies sang, and every night before the moon was full they sang it.

No-one looked after the old woman's grave, yet never a weed was seen. As she had tended their tulip bed, so now they tended her grave. And though no-one was ever seen to plant a flower, somehow her favourites sprang up in the night—rosemary and gillyflowers, lavender and forget-me-nots, sweet scabious and rue.

I cannot tell how the truth may be.
I say the tale as 'twas said to me.

LUTEY AND THE MERRYMAID



ORE than a hundred years since, there lived somewhere near Lizard Point a man called Lutey, who farmed a few acres of ground in the parish of Cury, or Corantyn, as it was then called. One summer's evening, seeing from the cliff, where he had just finished his day's work cutting turf, that the tide was far out, he walked down over the sands in search of any wreck which might have been cast ashore by the flood; at the same time he was cursing his luck, and murmuring because a god-sent worth securing hadn't come to the Lizard cliffs for a long while.

Finding nothing on the sands, Lutey turned for home, when he heard a sea-weedy sort of song, like the wailing of a woman or the crying of a child; it seemed to come from seaward. As he stopped to listen he caught the words of an old Cornish song:

Bledhen war vledhen gwra gorholyon dos,
Ha gans hern lun dyworth Dowr Gwavas mos.
Worteweth gwra gwyns North Yst aga whetha pell,
Rag an bobel pow tonn dh'aga dybry oll.
Yma pyth hern kepar oll a'n bys,
Moy a bobel voghosek es a bobel vras.

Year upon year may ships come,
And loaded with pilchards go from Gwavas Lake.
May a north-east wind blow them far at last,
For the hot-country people to eat them all.
Pilchards are riches alike for all the world,
But more for poor folk than the well-to-do.

Going in the direction of the song, he came near some rocks which were covered by the sea at high water, but now, about half ebb and being spring tides, the waves were a furlong or more distant from them. Passing round to the seaward side of these rocks, he saw what appeared to him a fairer woman than he had ever beheld before. As yet, he perceived little more than her head and shoulders, because all the lower part of her figure was hidden by the sea-weed which grew out of the rocks, it was spread around the fair one in the pool of sea-water that yet remained in a hollow at the foot of the rocks. Her golden-coloured hair, falling over her shoulders, and floating on the water, shone like sunbeams on the sea.

The little he saw of her skin showed that it was as smooth and clear as a polished shell. As the comely creature, still singing her sweet-sad song, looked intently on the distant ebbing sea, Lutey lingered on, admiring her unperceived. He longed to comfort her, but not knowing how to do so, and afeared of frightening her into fits by coming too suddenly upon her, he coughed and ahem'd to call her attention before coming closer.

Looking round and seeing the man, she uttered a more unearthly yell than ever, and then gliding down from the slippery stone into the pullan, hid all but her lovely head and swan-like neck beneath the water and the sea-weed.

'There, there, my handsome, don't 'ee take on so,' says Lutey. 'Don't 'ee be afeared of me, for I'm a sober and staid married man, near thirty years of age. Have 'ee lost your clothes? I don't see any, anywhere! Now, maidy, what shall I do to comfort 'ee?

'My turtle-dove, I wouldn't hurt 'ee for the world,' says Lutey, as he edged a little nearer.

He couldn't take his eyes from the beautiful creature for the life of him. The fair one, too, on hearing his soothing words, stayed her crying, and, when she looked on him, her eyes shone like the brightest of stars on a gloomy night.

Lutey drew near the edge of the pullan and, looking into the water, he saw the fan of a fish's tail quivering

and shaking amongst the floating sea-weed: then, he knew that the fair one was a merrymaid. He never had so near a view of one before, though he had often seen them, and heard them singing of moonlight nights over the water.

'Now my lovely maid of the waves,' said he, 'what shall I do for 'ee? Speak but the word; or give me a sign, if you don't understand my tongue.'

'Kind good man,' she replied, 'we people of the ocean understand all sorts of tongues, as we visit the shores of every country, and all the tribes of earth pass over our domain; besides, our hearing is so good that we catch what is said on land when we are miles away over the flood. You may be scared, perhaps, to see me simply dressed, like naked truth, because your females are always covered with such things as would hinder our sporting in the waves?'

'No, my darling, I amn't the least bit frightened to see 'ee without your dress and petticoats on,' Lutey replied, as he still drew nearer. 'Now, my dear, don't 'ee hide your handsome figure in the pullan any longer, but sit up and tell me what makes 'ee grieve so?'

The merrymaid rose out of the water, seated herself on a ledge of the rock, combed back her golden ringlets from her face, and then Lutey observed that her hair was so abundant that it fell around and covered her figure like an ample robe of glittering gold. Then she sighed and said,

'Oh, unlucky merrymaid that I am; know, good man, that only three hours ago I left my husband soundly sleeping on a bed of soft and sweet sea-flowers, with our children sporting round him. I told the eldest to be sure and keep off the shrimps and sea-fleas, that they mightn't get into their Daddy's ears and nose to disturb his rest. "Now take care," I told them, "that the crabs don't pinch your Dad's tail and wake him up, whilst I'm away to get 'ee something nice for supper, and if you be good children I'll bring 'ee home some pretty young dolphins and sea-devils for 'ee to play with."

'Yet,' she went on to say, 'with all my care I very much fear my merryman will wake up and want some-

thing to eat before I get home. I ought to know when the tide leaves every rock on the coast, yet I was so stupid as to remain here looking at myself in the pullan as I combed the broken sea-weed, shrimps, crabs and sea-fleas out of my hair, without observing, till a few minutes since, that the sea had gone out so far as to leave a bar of dry sand between me and the waves.'

'Yet why should 'ee be in such trouble, my heart's own dear?' Lutey asked. 'Can't 'ee wait here, and I'll bear ye company till the tide comes in, when you may swim away home?'

'Oh, no,' she said. 'I want to get back before the turn of the tide; because, then, my husband and all the rest of the merrymen are sure to wake up hungry and look for their suppers, an', can 'ee believe it of my monster, that if I am not at hand with half-a-dozen fine mullets, a few scores of mackerel, or something else equally nice to suit his dainty stomach, when he awakes with the appetite of a shark, he's sure to eat some of our pretty children. Merrymen and maids would be as plenty in the sea as herrings if their gluttons of fathers didn't gobble up the tender babes. Scores of my dear ones have gone through his ugly jaws, never to come out alive.'

She sighed, gazing sadly at the man with two tails.

'Ah,' she said, 'what wouldn't I give to have a pair of tails like you, that I might come on the land and see all the strange and beautiful creatures we view from the waves. If you will but serve me now by carrying me to the sea, I'll grant to you any three wishes you may desire.'

With that she took from her hair a golden comb in a handle of pearl, which she gave to Lutey, saying,

'Here, my dear, keep this as a token of my faith; now mind, whenever you be in any difficulty, you have only to pass that comb through the sea three times, calling me as often, and I'll come to ye on the next flood tide. My name is Madgy Figgy.'

Lutey was so charmed with the flutelike melody of the merrymaid's voice that he remained listening to her and looking into her lovely sea-green eyes till he was like one enchanted, and ready to do everything she

desired; so stooping down, he took the merrymaid in his arms, that he might carry her out to sea.

Lutey being a powerful fellow, he bore the merrymaid easily on his left arm, she encircling his neck with her right. They proceeded thus over the sands for some minutes before he made up his mind what to wish for. He had heard of a man who, meeting with similar luck, wished that all he touched might turn to gold, and knew the fatal result of his thoughtless wish, and of the bad luck which happened to several others with selfish desires.

'Come, my good man,' the merrymaid said, 'lose no more time, but tell me for what three things do ye wish? Will you have long life, strength, and riches?'

'No,' says he, 'I wish only for the power to do good to my neighbours: first that I may be able to break the spells of witchcraft; second that I may have such power to charm away diseases; and third that these gifts may continue in my family forever.'

The merrymaid promised that he and his family should ever possess these gifts, and that, for the sake of his unselfish desires, none of his family should ever come to want.

They had still a long way to go before they reached the sea. As they went slowly along, the merrymaid told him of their beautiful dwellings, and of the pleasant life they led beneath the flood.

'In our cool caverns we have everything one needs,' said she, 'and more. The walls of our abodes are encrusted with coral and amber, entwined with sea-flowers of every hue, and their floors are all strewn with pearls. The roof sparkles of diamonds, and other gems of such brightness that their rays make our deep grottos in the ocean hillsides as light as day.'

Then, embracing Lutey with both her arms around his neck, she continued,

'Come with me, love, and see the beauty of the merrymaid's dwellings. The ornaments, with which we take delight to adorn our halls and chambers, are the noble sons and fair daughters of earth, whom the wind and waves send in foundered ships to our abodes. Come, I will show you thousands of handsome bodies

so embalmed, in a way only known to ourselves, with choice salts and rare spices, that they look more beautiful than when they breathed, as you will say when you see them reposing on beds of amber, coral, and pearl. Aye, and when you see their limbs all dressed with glistening gems, move gracefully to and fro with the motion of the waves, you will think they still live.'

'Perhaps I should think them all very fine,' Lutey replied, 'yet faix, I'd rather find in your dwellings, a few of the puncheons of rum that must often come down to ye in the holds of sunken ships. What may 'ee do with all the good liquor, tobacco, and other nice things that find their way down below?'

'Yes indeed,' she answered, 'it would do your heart good to see the casks of brandy, kegs of Hollands, pipes of wine, and puncheons of rum that come to us. We take a shellful now and then to warm our stomachs, but there's any quantity below for you, so come along, do come.'

'I would like to very well,' says Lutey, 'but surely I should be drowned beneath the waves?'

'Don't 'ee believe it,' said she, 'you know that we women of the sea can do wonders. I can fashion 'ee a pair of gills; yes, in less than five minutes I'll make you such a pair as will enable 'ee to live in the water as much at your ease as a cod or conger. The beauty of your handsome face will not be injured, because your beard and whiskers will hide the small slits required to be made under your chin. Besides, when you have seen all you would like to see, or get tired of my company and life in the water, you can return to land and bring back with you as much of our treasures as you like, so come along, my handsome.'

The time passed in this kind of talk till Lutey, wading through the sea (now above his knees), brought her near the breakers. He felt so charmed with the merrymaid's beauty and enchanted by the music of her voice that he was about to plunge with her into the waves. The merrymaid's sea-green eyes sparkled as she saw the man was all but in her power.

Then, just in the nick of time, Lutey's dog, which had followed unnoticed, barked and howled so loud

that the charmed man looked round and, when he saw the smoke curling up from his chimney, the cows in the fields, and everything looking so beautiful on green land, the spell of the merrymaid's song was broken. He tried long in vain to free himself from her close embrace, for he now looked with loathing on her fishy tail, scaly body and sea-green eyes, till he roared out in agony,

'Someone save me from this devil of a fish! '

Then, rousing from his stupor, with his right hand he snatched a knife from his girdle and, flashing the bright steel before the merrymaid's eyes, shouted,

'By God, I'll cut your throat and rip out your heart if you don't unclasp your arms from my neck, and uncoil your conger-tail from my legs.'

The sight of the bright steel (which, folk say, has power against enchantments) made the merrymaid drop from his neck into the sea. Still looking towards him, she swam away, singing in her plaintive tone,

'Farewell my sweet, for nine long years, then I'll come for thee again.'

Lutey had barely the strength to wade out of the sea and reach, before dark, a sown in the cliff where he usually kept a few tubs of liquor buried in the sand, under any lumber or wreck, secured there above high-water mark. The weary man took a gimlet from his pocket, spiled an anker of brandy, fixed a quill in the hole, and sucked a little of the liquor to refresh himself; then he lay down among some old sails and was soon asleep.

In the meantime, dame Lutey passed an anxious time because her husband hadn't been home to supper, which the good man never missed. And she had made his favourite: tiddy oggy pastie, with figgie hobbin, raisins and all, to follow. As there was neither sight nor sign of him when breakfast was ready, she went down to the sown and there she found her man fast asleep.

'Come, wake up,' said she; 'and what made thee stay down here without thy supper? Thee hast had a drop too much I expect! '

'No, by gamblers,' said he, rising up and staring round, 'but am I here in the sown or am I in a cavern at the bottom of the sea? And are you my dear Madgy?

Ef you are, give me a hornful of rum, do; but you don't look much like her.'

'No indeed,' said the wife, 'they call me An Betty Lutey, and, what's more, I never heard tell of the lass thee art dreaman about.'

'Well then, ef thee art my old woman, thee hast had a narrow escape, I can tell thee, of being left as bad as a widow and the poor children orphans, this very night.'

Then on the way home, he related how he had found a stranded merrymaid, that for taking her out to sea she had promised to grant him three wishes, and had given him the comb (which he showed his wife) as a token.

'But,' said he, 'if it hadn't been for the howling of old Jump to rouse me out of the trance, and make me see how far I was from land, as sure as a gun I should now be with the merrymaids drinkan rum or huntan sharks at the bottom of the sea.'

When Lutey had related all particulars, he charged his wife not to say anything about it to the neighbours, as some of them, perhaps, wouldn't credit his strange adventure; but she, unable to rest with such a burden on her mind, trotted round half the parish to tell the story, as a great secret to all the curtseying old women she could find, and showed them what Lutey gave her as the merrymaid's comb, to make the story good.

The wonder (always told by the old gossips as a secret) was talked of far and near in the course of a few weeks, and very soon folks, who were bewitched or otherwise afflicted, came in crowds to be helped by the new pellar.

Although Lutey had parted from the merrymaid ungraciously, yet he found she was true to her promise. It was also soon discovered that he was endowed with far more than the ordinary white-witch's skill. Yet the pellar dearly purchased the sea-woman's favours.

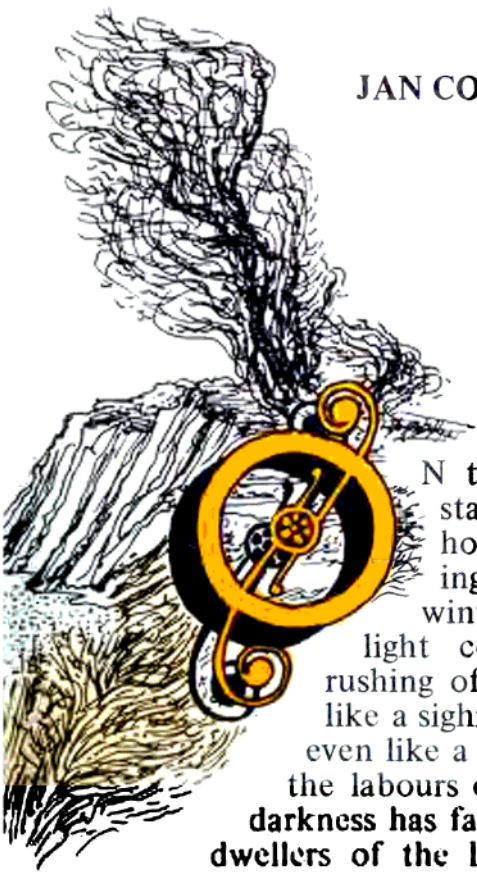
For nine years after, to the day on which Lutey bore her to the water, he and a comrade were out fishing one clear moonlight night; though the weather was calm and the water smooth as a glass, about midnight the sea suddenly arose around their boat, and in the foam of the curling waves they saw a merrymaid approach them, with all her body, above the waist, out

of the water, and her golden hair floating behind and around her.

'My hour is come,' said Lutey, the moment he saw her; and, rising like one distraught, he plunged into the sea, swam with the merrymaid a little way, then they both sank, and the sea became as smooth as ever.

Lutey's body was never found and, in spite of every precaution, once in nine years, some of his descendants find a grave in the sea. All the same, the Lutey family is still well known in Cornwall for their remarkable powers of healing; one still keeps the merrymaid's comb (which some people are unbelieving enough to say is only part of a shark's jaw; but unbelieving people have no imagination).

JAN COO



ON the slopes of Sharp Tor stands the solitary farmhouse of Rowbrook, watching the valley below. As winter draws near the dimsy light comes early. Then the rushing of the River Dart sounds like a sighing wind, and sometimes even like a human voice. And when the labours of the day are over, and darkness has fallen upon the moor, the dwellers of the lonely farmhouse gather round the hearth upon which the peat fire is burning, oblivious of the cold without, and the winter winds howling over the heath.

The low kitchen is paved with large flags of granit and the walls are plastered and coated with whitewas Overhead the beams supporting the floor of the roo above are seen, for there is no ceiling, and these, toc were originally whitened, but the smoke from the pea fire has changed the colour to a dirty yellow. Piece of wood roughly nailed across the beams form rack which contain several large flitches of bacon, dry an brown; they assure the company that should they b 'snowed up' within the house in winter, they will no die of starvation. At one end of the kitchen stands dresser, upon which are arranged a goodly number o plates and dishes, with jugs and cups of an antiqu pattern, and beside it, in a worm-eaten oaken case stands the clock, ticking with a loud, solemn tick. A long deal table, scrupulously clean, is placed on th side where is the window, the latter being closed wit shutters, and fastened by a thick bar.

On the wooden chimney-piece are a pair of bras candlesticks, and a brass pestal and mortar, all very bright, a tinder box, and two white china dogs, with black ears and gilt collars, and various other small articles.

A settle is placed obliquely in front of the hearth, springing from one corner of it, and acts as a partition, dividing the main portion of the room from the fireside. A lighted candle is set upon the table in a tin candlestick with an immense flat stand, but the kitchen is illuminated chiefly by the cheerful blaze from a faggot thrown on the top of the peat, over which a large kettle is suspended by an iron crook hanging down from the vast chimney. The slow and solemn tick, tick, of the old-fashioned clock, with the incessant chirping of a cricket in the chimney corner, are plainly heard when the conversation occasionally ceases, and above all is the sound of the howling wind, blowing in violent gusts around the corners of the house.

Seated on the settle are the farmer and his eldest son, while two younger men occupy stools in the corner of the spacious hearth, and quite close to the glowing pile of peat, evidently enjoying the genial warmth. On a low chair, on the opposite side of the fire to the settle, sits the white-haired old grandfather,

and at one end of the long table, engaged in knitting, is the farmer's wife, the other being occupied by a rosy-cheeked damsel who is ironing some small linen articles.

A footstep is heard without, causing the little company to look towards the door, which opens and admits a young lad, all excited.

'There's someone callin', down by river,' he cries. 'Come quick! I guess they be in peril of their lives.'

The two farm labourers rose slowly, and unwillingly left their stools in the snug kitchen. They followed the boy to the spot by the riverside where he had heard the voice. Yet nothing could be heard now but the rushing of the water in the darkness of the night.

''Er must 'a bin mistook,' said one.

'There's nowt to hear there,' said the other.

'I du know for certain sure there was. 'Twas a cry for help,' declared the boy.

They listened again, and suddenly, not far away, came a voice calling out,

'Jan Coo, Jan Coo! '

'Where be yu tu? What du 'ee want?' called the men.

But the voice stopped. Only the river was heard, running endlessly on.

'Bring a light, Jim,' called one of the men, and Jim hurried back through the darkness to the farm.

But though they searched with lanterns high and low not a sign of any living creature could they find.

The next night it was the same. The work of the farm was over, and the men gathered about the fire, when in from the yard ran the boy again with the selfsame tale of the voice by the river bank.

This time there was no mistake. The night was starless and wild, and out of the distances beyond the river came the plaintive cry,

'Jan Coo, Jan Coo! ' echoing through the wintry night air.

''Tis the piskies, I'll warrant,' said one of the men. 'Ess, that's what 'tis, for sartain. Though I never knowed piskies be out on such a mortal bad night as this.'

'Us had better let'n bide and not meddle with'n,' said the other.

"Tis only bad luck 'ull come of it if us du,' said the first.

So they all went back to the farm. And it was decided to take no further notice of the strange voice should it be heard again.

And heard again it was. Not a night passed but, as soon as the men were gathered about the fire after their evening meal, the strange voice again rang through the valley,

'Jan Coo, Jan Coo! '

The winter was nearly over, and the people of the farm were talking of the longer days, and the first primroses of spring were in the lanes. It was evening-time, and the boy and a friend were climbing the hill on their way back to the farm.

Suddenly through the still air came the familiar voice, crying from Langmarsh Pit beyond the river,

'Jan Coo, Jan Coo, Jan Coo! '

The boy shouted in reply, and the voice went on calling,

'Jan Coo! '

"Tasn't stopped this time, like'n did before when us called out together,' said his friend.

"Tis me they want. I'm sure of it. I'll go and see who 'tis,' said the boy.

He ran off down the hill towards the river again. He knew a good place to cross, for the boulders in its rocky bed made excellent stepping stones. His friend could see him down below, picking his way cautiously across the turbulent waters of the Dart. Then the dim light faded in the west and the boy was lost from view. Still the voice came from Langmarsh Pit,

'Jan Coo, Jan Coo! ' ringing through the valley lands, and echoing to the very farmhouse door.

As his friend raised the latch to go in, the voice ceased, and though he stayed listening for a while it never came again.

He told them all in the kitchen,

'Maybe us'll learn the truth of the matter when 'er du come again.'

'Ess, they piskies get up to some purty tricks,' the farmer said.

But hour after hour went by and the boy did not

come back. They all went down to the river to look for him, but they searched and searched in vain.

"Tis the piskies, I'll warrant,' said a moor-man. 'They'll keep him a year and a day.'

"Tis more likely the voice of the river callin' him,' another said, mysteriously.

But the boy was never seen again, nor the voice ever heard, even on the darkest night. And to this day Devon folk will swear that it was not the hooting of an owl, but the calling of the piskies by the river. For, after all, the old folk do say,

'River Dart, O River Dart!
Every year ye claim a heart.'

JACKY-MY-LANTERN

THERE was an ancient old shepherd called Jacob and he was reckoned very knowledgeable and a wonder with the sheep; and his old dog, Tan, was considered nearly as wise as he. But they were both getting along in years and the farmer thought best to find them a pair

of helpers, man and dog, for Old Jacob and Tan to train up in their way.

'If them'm ready to larn, Old Jacob and Tan will larn 'em kind and steady, and if they'm stubborn they can find out fast enough the hard way,' says Farmer.

So he sent for a lad and his clever young bitch that had quite a name down the valley for being real lively at the work.

'Young enough to be larned and sharp enough to heed,' says Farmer to Old Jacob.

The young boy and Fan come all right, proud as a cow with two tails to be given such a chance of a job and show Farmer what they could do in the way of rounding up twenty sheep and 'twas all over and done in five minutes with the boy and the bitch between 'em and come back prouder than ever to Farmer. He was stood watching with Old Jacob, and Tan lying quiet at their feet.

'All bark and hustle and whistle,' says Farmer. 'Sheep don't like bustle. You'll have trouble herding them after that. They won't forget.'

The boy and his Fan didn't care for the sound of that at all, but was certain sure they knowed better.

Then Farmer says,

'Show 'em, Old Jacob.'

And Old Jacob just says quiet,

'There's a limpetty ewe keeps in the middle whichever way they'll turn—fetch her out, Tan! '

Well, then Tan goes gentle past the flock as was facing and stamping every ways at once and they watched him go on out around and lay down quiet. Sheep knowed Tan and took comfort at his guarding 'em, and begun to nibble again; then old Tan walk in among 'em friendly and quiet and brings out lame ewe without most of 'em raising their heads.

Old Jacob gets out his tar tin and cleans the cut. Tan lays down and Farmer turns to boy and bitch.

'You'll need a bit longer afore either can do that with a frightened flock. Best larn how. Puppies and boys be always in a girt scramble. Sheep an't.'

Well then, even after that the boy thought Old Jacob silly slow, didn't handle Tan with whistling, didn't

STUDENT BAR ASSOCIATION

do anything but speak a word or two to Tan. He was slow and steady too, and far too old, and ought to be shot—even Fan found him dull—he never raced and chased and made the sheep move any faster than a good even walk.

Old Jacob was more patient than Farmer who came up one day to see the two pairs at work and found the flock coming over the downs fair suent, but the lad was scowling at the back and Fan was whimpering to rush at the heels of the last. Tan was just bringing them as steady as Time right back to where Old Jacob stood.

'Larn 'em gentle,' says Farmer. 'But he've a bad temper towards our Tan. Watch out, Jacob. The bitch is clever, I'll not deny, but I'm thinking they'll both need to larn with a leather strap.'

Old Jacob looks down at Tan lying quiet by the flock and at Fan all a-quiver to be off in a bustle, and at boy's scowling face, and says slowly,

"Twan't be too long neither now if we'm going to make proper shepherds of the pair.'

Well, the day of proof came in the middle of lambing-time. Fan was growing useful if boy didn't always excite her to fullishness—she'd sooner copy Tan at work and not rush with the boy, but he was her master. Tan was getting stiff-jointed after a snow-scad and Old Jacob kept him in sheep-hut where he could lick and keep orphan lambs warm.

There was only twins and Old Jacob felt the loss of the mother deeply. He prided himself that Farmer hadn't lost a ewe for years, but these were twins, and the double cost the dam her life. The lambs would have died too, but for Tan's care.

When it was dark, boy and Fan come back from rounding up the stragglers into the folds.

Boy should have been pleased to be trusted but he came in too cock-a-hoop and aimed a toe at Tan, but thought better of it when he seed Old Jacob look his way.

'Fan and me brought in twenty-one,' says he proudly.

'Then where's the three missin' ewes near their time as was wanted particler?' says Old Jacob grimly. 'You

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NARAYAN RAO MELGIRI

and Fan been in one of your bustles and gone too fast for they.'

'"Tis coming up fog and more snow,' grumble the boy, 'and cold as death.'

'Then go out and die finding 'em, the silly pair of you. You han't even begun to be a shepherd yet—I can't leave this beast, she's in trouble in her labour. But Tan will go and help you. He's saved the lives of foolish ewes in deep snow worse than this mist and scat and I'll follow if I can later, with the lantern. 'Tis real trouble this.'

Tan was already outside the lambing-shed waiting in the dark, so out goes boy like a hod-me-dod all a-shiver, and Fan with a bark and a little wag of a willing tail, and when they got out of sight in the fog boy lets Tan have it with his boot-end, and Tan just give him a nice slash with his old teeth as made him think again. Be black and blue his leg would, and limp for days he would, and he counted himself lucky Old Jacob hadn't seen that kick.

But someone else had and meant to pay it back even better than Tan.

Jacky-my-Lantern came at nights to sit on the lambing-shed roof and savour the warmth of the hut, and the pannikin of ewes' milk Old Jacob put out at nights for him. Jacky-my-Lantern liked the old man for thinking of mist and snow and biting wind at night and giving a bit of warmth and comfort, and he hadn't forgotten Fan golloping up the cream just once. She never did it again and boy couldn't think why she bolted into shed squealing like a nestletripe.

Tan knew, and Old Jacob, but they didn't let on, and Fan wasn't too eager to rush out at night unless boy was with her. But this time she had boy and Tan so she rushed off a bit stiff after the other trudge, but ready to rush back and make a big noise about it all and she passed clean through the fust gate out onto the downs and boy followed, but Tan lay down by the gate-ditch and didn't move.

So boy fetched him a crack on the head with his crook and limped on into the fog and there up before him he saw a beckoning lantern.

'Old Jacob, he came arter all,' he thought.

And he wasn't too ready to tell him about Tan, so he didn't hurry too hard. Fan was up there barking and the lantern went bobbing in between mist and snow-scads and boy followed.

Well then, that lantern went bobbing and Fan went rushing and barking, and boy limped and shivered and never quite caught up until Jacky-my-Lantern led 'em right knee-deep into a nice, marshy, frosty spring—then he give a queery-like laugh and went out.

Well, if it was cold and dark afore, it was black and bitter cold now, and they crawled along, boy crying and Fan whimpering, without a notion where they was to until Farmer's Lass barked at 'en and Farmer bringed a real lantern to 'en.

'I be takin' the nuss lambs back for missus to bring up off the bottle. First in ten years, and where may you two be a-dawdling to?'

'O measter,' blubbered the boy, 'we bin miles looking for they three ewes due to lamb.'

'Due to lamb?' says Farmer. 'Tan bringed 'en in from gate-ditch just outside fold and a job it took him on account of a sore muzzle. My Lass she helped pull 'en out just in time. They'm all the better for Old Jacob's help now. Three nice lambs, and only just in time. Tan knew better than to lay hand on another man's dog. You goo in and face up to Old Jacob and he'll finish your schooling the hard way.'

And away the Farmer went with the nuss lambs warm in an old coat and Lass at heel and his lantern shining.

Boy (he were a good boy at heart, though stubborn) he give shuddering, soaked, frozen Fan a pat and says,

'Come lass, let's take our leathering and get warm again.'

Then something gave an eerie-queery laugh and a lantern shone on shed roof-top and Old Jacob came to the door with a strap in his hand and they went in.

Fan scuttled in against the wall behind Tan who licked her warm with his bloody muzzle and Old Jacob give the boy a smart dozen with the strap, then he stopped.

'I reckon Tan paid the rest,' he said. 'Now get your porridge both of 'ee unless you 'm warm enough.'

And Jacky-my-Lantern sat out on the roof in the mist and laughed again and again until another bowl of porridge came outside for him.

CHERRY OF ZENNOR

OLD Honey lived with his wife and family in a little hut of two rooms and a 'talfat' on the cliff side of Trereen in Zennor. The old couple had half a score of children, who were all reared in this place. They lived as they best could on the produce of a few acres of ground, which were too poor to keep even a goat in good heart. The heaps of crogans about the hut led one to believe that their chief food was limpets and gweans. They had, however, fish and potatoes most days, and pork and broth now and then of a Sunday. At Christmas and the Feast they had white bread. There was no healthier nor a handsomer family in the parish than Old Honey's. Now Honey had a

daughter Cherry, and she could run as fast as a hare, and was ever full of frolic and mischief.

Whenever the miller's boy came into the town, tied his horse to the furze rick and called in to see if anyone desired to send corn to the mill, Cherry would jump on to its back and gallop off to the cliff. When the miller's boy gave chase, and she could ride no further over the edge of that rocky coast, she would take to the cairns, and the swiftest dog could not catch her, much less the miller's boy.

Soon after Cherry got into her teens she became very discontented, because year after year her mother had been promising her a new frock that she might go off as smart as the rest, 'three on one horse to Morva fair,' as the saying goes. As certain as the time came round the money was wanting, so Cherry had nothing decent. She could neither go to fair, nor to church, nor to meeting.

Cherry was sixteen. One of her playmates had a new dress smartly trimmed with ribbons, and she told Cherry how she had been to Nancledry to the preaching, and how she had ever so many sweethearts who brought her home. This put the lively Cherry in a fever of desire. She declared to her mother she would go off to the 'low countries,' to the valleys about Towednack and Zennor, to seek for service, that she might get some clothes like other girls.

Her mother wished her to go to Towednack that she might have the chance of seeing her now and then of a Sunday.

'No, no,' said Cherry. 'I'll never go to live in the parish where the cow ate the bell-rope, and where they have fish and taties every day, and conger-pie of a Sunday, for a change.'

One fine morning, Cherry tied up a few things in a bundle and prepared to start. She promised her father that she would get service as near home as she could, and come home at the earliest opportunity. The old man charged her to take care she wasn't carried away by sailors or pirates, and allowed her to depart.

Cherry took the road leading to Ludgvan and Gulval. When she lost sight of the chimneys of Trereen,

she got out of heart and had a great mind to go home again. But she went on.

At length she came to the 'four cross roads' on the Lady Downs, sat herself down on a stone by the roadside, and cried to think of her home, which she might never see again.

Her crying at last came to an end, and she resolved to go home and make the best of it.

When she dried her eyes and held up her head she was surprised to see a gentleman coming towards her; for she couldn't think where he came from; no one was to be seen on the Downs a few minutes before.

The gentleman wished her 'good morning,' enquiring of the road to Twednack, and asked Cherry where she was going.

Cherry told the gentleman that she had left home that morning to look for service, but that her heart had failed her, and she was going back over the hills to Zennor again.

'I never expected to meet with such luck as this,' said the gentleman. 'I left home this morning to seek for a nice clean girl to keep house for me, and here you are.'

He then told Cherry that he had been recently left a widower, and that he had one dear little boy, of whom Cherry might have charge. Cherry was the very girl that would suit him. She was handsome and cleanly. He could see her clothes were so mended that the first piece could not be discovered; yet she was as sweet as a rose, and all the water in the sea could not make her cleaner. Poor Cherry said, 'Yes, Sir,' to everything, yet she did not understand one quarter of what the gentleman said. Her mother had instructed her to say 'Yes, Sir,' to the parson, or any gentleman, when, like herself, she did not understand them. The gentleman told her he lived but a short way off, down in the low countries; that she would have very little to do but milk the cow and look after the baby; so Cherry consented to go with him.

Away they went; he talking so kindly that Cherry had no notion how time was moving, and she quite forgot the distance she had walked.

At length they were in lanes, so shaded with trees

that a checker of sunshine scarcely gleamed on the road. As far as she could see, all was trees and flowers. Sweet briars and honeysuckles perfumed the air, and the reddest of ripe apples hung from the trees over the lane.

Then they came to a stream of water as clear as crystal, which ran across the lane. It was, however, very dark, and Cherry paused to see how she should cross the river. The gentleman put his arm around her waist and carried her over, so that she did not wet her feet.

The lane was getting darker and darker, and narrower and narrower, and they seemed to be going rapidly down hill. Cherry took firm hold of the gentleman's arm, and thought, as he had been so kind to her, she could go with him to the world's end.

After walking a little farther, the gentleman opened a gate which led into a beautiful garden, and said,

'Cherry, my dear, this is the place we live in.'

Cherry could scarcely believe her eyes. She had never seen anything approaching this place for beauty. Flowers of every dye were around her; fruits of all kinds hung above her; and the birds, sweeter of song than any she had ever heard, burst out into a chorus of rejoicing. She had heard Granny tell of enchanted places. Could this be one of them? No. The gentleman was as big as the parson; and now a little boy came running down the garden walk shouting,

'Daddy, Daddy.'

The child appeared, from his size, to be about two or three years of age; but there was a peculiar look of age about him. His eyes were brilliant and piercing, and he had a crafty expression. As Cherry said,

'He could look anybody down.'

Before Cherry could speak to the child, a very old dry-boned, ugly-looking woman made her appearance, and, seizing the child by the arm, dragged him into the house, mumbling and scolding. Before, however, she was lost sight of, the old hag cast one look at Cherry, which shot through her heart like a gimblet.

Seeing Cherry somewhat disconcerted, the master explained that the old woman was his late wife's grandmother: that she would remain with them until Cherry

knew her work, and no longer, for she was old and ill-tempered, and must go. At length, having feasted her eyes on the garden, Cherry was taken into the house, and this was yet more beautiful. Flowers of every kind grew everywhere, and the sun seemed to shine everywhere, and yet she did not see the sun.

Aunt Prudence—so was the old woman named—spread a table in a moment with a great variety of nice things, and Cherry made a hearty supper. She was now directed to go to bed in a chamber at the top of the house, in which the child was to sleep also. Prudence directed Cherry to keep her eyes closed, whether she could sleep or not, as she might, perchance, see things she would not like. She was not to speak to the child all night. She was to rise at break of day; then take the boy to a spring in the garden, wash him, and anoint his eyes with an ointment, which she would find in a crystal box in a cleft of the rock, but she was not on any account to touch her own eyes with it.

Then Cherry was to call the cow; and having taken a bucketful of milk, to draw a bowl of the last milk for the boy's breakfast. Cherry was dying with curiosity. She several times began to question the child, but he always stopped her with,

'I'll tell Aunt Prudence.'

According to her orders, Cherry was up in the morning early. The little boy conducted the girl to the spring, which flowed in crystal purity from a granite rock, which was covered with ivy and beautiful mosses. The child was duly washed and his eyes duly anointed. Cherry saw no cow, but her little charge said she must call the cow.

'Pruit, pruit, pruit! ' called Cherry, just as she would call the cows at home.

And lo! A beautiful great cow came from amongst the trees, and stood on the bank beside Cherry.

Cherry had no sooner placed her hands on the cow's teats than four streams of milk flowed down and soon filled the bucket. The boy's bowl was then filled, and he drank it. This being done, the cow quietly walked away, and Cherry returned to the house to be instructed in her daily work.

The old woman, Prudence, gave Cherry a hearty breakfast, and then informed her that she must keep to the kitchen, and attend to her work there—to scald the milk, make the butter, and clean all the platters and bowls with water and gard. Cherry was charged to avoid curiosity. She was not to go into any other part of the house; and she was not to try and open any locked doors.

After her ordinary work was done on the second day, her master required Cherry to help him in the garden, to pick the apples and pears, and to weed the leeks and onions.

Glad was Cherry to get out of the old woman's sight. Aunt Prudence always sat with one eye on her knitting, and the other boring through poor Cherry. Now and then she'd grumble,

'I knew Robin would bring down some fool from Zennor—better for both that she had tarried away.'

Cherry and her master got on famously, and whenever Cherry had finished weeding a bed, her master would give her a kiss to show how pleased he was.

After a few days, old Aunt Prudence took Cherry into those parts of the house which she had never seen. They passed through a long dark passage. Cherry was then made to take off her shoes; and they entered a room, the floor of which was like glass, and all round, perched on the shelves, and on the floor, were people, big and small, turned to stone. Of some, there were only the head and shoulders, the arms being cut off; others were perfect.

Cherry told the old woman she 'wouldn't cum ony furder for the world.' She thought from the first she was got into a land of Small People underground, only master was like other men; but now she know'd she was with the conjurers, who had turned all these people to stone. She had heard talk on 'em up in Zennor, and she knew they might at any moment wake up and eat her.

Old Prudence laughed at Cherry, and drove her on, insisted upon her rubbing up a box, 'like a coffin on six legs,' until she could see her face in it. Well, Cherry did not want for courage, so she began to rub with a

will; the old woman standing by, knitting all the time calling out every now and then,

'Rub, rub, rub! Harder and faster! '

At length Cherry got desperate and, giving a violen rub at one of the corners, she nearly upset the box When, O Lor! It gave out such a doleful, unearthl sound, that Cherry thought all the stone people wer coming to life, and with her fright she fell down in a fit.

The master heard all this noise, and came in tc enquire into the cause of the hubbub. He was in grea wrath, kicked old Prudence out of the house for takin Cherry into that shut-up room, carried Cherry into the kitchen, and soon, with some cordial, recovered her senses.

Cherry could not remember what had happened; but she knew there was something fearful in the other part of the house. But Cherry was mistress now—old Aunt Prudence was gone. Her master was so kind and loving that a year passed by like a summer day. Occasionally her master left home for a season; then he would return and spend much time in the enchanted apartments, and Cherry was certain she had heard him talking to the stone people.

Cherry had everything the human heart could desire; but she was not happy. She would know more of the place and the people. She had discovered that the ointment made the little boy's eyes bright and strange, and she thought often that he saw more than she did; she would try; yes, she would!

Well, next morning the child was washed, his eyes anointed, and the cow milked; she sent the boy to gather some flowers in the garden, and taking a 'crum' of ointment, she put it into her eye. Oh, her eye would be burned out of her head!

Cherry ran to the pool beneath the rock to wash her burning eye: when lo! She saw at the bottom of the water hundreds of little people, mostly ladies, playing—and there was her master, as small as the others, playing with them. Everything now looked different about the place. Small people were everywhere, hiding in the flowers sparkling with diamonds, swinging in

the trees, and running and leaping under and over the blades of grass. The master never showed himself above the water all day; but at night he rode up to the house like the handsome gentleman she had seen before. He went to the enchanted chamber, and Cherry soon heard the most beautiful music.

In the morning her master was off, dressed as if to follow the hounds. He returned at night, left Cherry to herself, and proceeded at once to his private apartments. Thus it was day after day, until Cherry could stand it no longer. So she peeped through the key-hole, and saw her master with lots of ladies, singing; while one dressed like a queen was playing on the coffin.

However, the next day the master remained at home to gather fruit. Cherry was to help him, and when, as usual, he looked to kiss her, she slapped his face, and told him to kiss the Small People, like himself, with whom he played under the water.

So he found out that Cherry had used the ointment.

With much sorrow, he told her she must go home, that he would have no spy on his actions, and that Aunt Prudence must come back. Long before day, Cherry was called by her master. He gave her lots of clothes and other things; took her bundle in one hand, and a lantern in the other, and bade her follow him.

They went on for miles on miles, all the time going uphill, through lanes and narrow passages. When they came at last on level ground, it was near daybreak. He kissed Cherry, told her she was punished for her idle curiosity; but that he would, if she behaved well, come sometimes on the Lady Downs to see her.

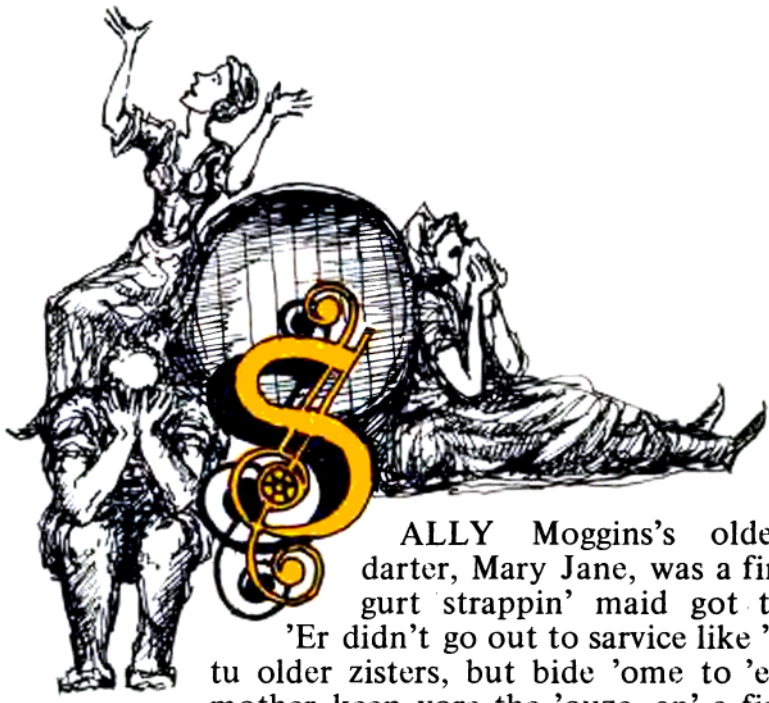
Saying this, he disappeared. The sun rose, and there was Cherry seated on a granite stone, without a soul within miles of her—a desolate moor having taken the place of a smiling garden. Long, long did Cherry sit in sorrow, but at last she thought she would go home.

Her parents had supposed her dead, and when they saw her, they believed her to be her own ghost. Cherry told her story, which at first everyone doubted. But Cherry never varied her tale, and at last everyone believed it.

They say Cherry was never afterwards right in her

head, and on moonlight nights, until she died, she would wander on to the Lady Downs to look for her master, though she never found him.

THE THREE SILLIES



SALLY Moggins's oldest darter, Mary Jane, was a fine gurt strappin' maid got tu. 'Er didn't go out to sarvice like 'er tu older zisters, but bide 'ome to 'elp mother keep vore the 'ouze, an' a fine maid to work 'er was zo iverybody zed, an' niver begritch'd plenty of elbaw graise same's most o' the lazy shirkin' toads do nowadays. I daresay your washin' machines an' washin' powders, an' globe polishes, an' all that sort o' trade they advertise to clain things wi'out your tichin' o' min, be all very well so var's they go, but they bain't nort wi'out elbaw graise arter all.

Wull, Mary Jane, as you might suppose, zune 'ad tu or dree young men 'ankering' arter 'er, but the unly wan 'er'd 'ave ort to zay tu was Tom Chidley, thicky gurt rid-'aided chap what used to draive the fuss team of 'osses vor farmer Miller, auver to Bangham.

Wan day Mary Jane was churin' about the 'ouze, jis'

like 'er always did, when zummin' come'd auver 'er all to wance like: 'er zot down 'pon a chair, fling'd 'er eppern auver 'er 'aid, an' begin'd to rocky tu an' fraw, sobbin' same's if the 'eart of 'er was ready to break.

'Lord a massy me, maid,' zes 'er mother, starin' tu 'er wi' 'er eyes oppen so wide's tu tay-cups, 'what a turn you do gi'e anybody to be sure. Whativer's the metter wey 'ee?'

'Aw, mother,' 'er zes, 'don't 'ee quarly wey me, I can't 'elp it. You knaw funny things will come into anybody's 'aid sometimes, an' a quare thing come into my 'aid. I can't tell no more'n you can 'ow 'twas, but all to wance I begun to think to mezel': Sposin' me an' Tom was to git married, an' sposin' us was to 'ave a little bway, an' sposin' 'e was to git rinnin' about to play out'n court, an'—an' (boo-oo!)—sposin' 'e was to—(boo-oo!)—val' into the weel an'—(boo-oo!)—git drowned. Aw, mother, 'tis tu dreadful to think about.'

'Wull, Mary Jane! ' zes 'er mother, 'of all the gurt sillies I iver yerd tell o' if you don't bait the lot! Whativer can I 'ave a du'd that a darter o' mine should be jis' a poor waik fule? Who du 'ee take arter I should like to knaw, wi' yer ole crackpot 'sposins';—'Sposin' you was married, an' 'sposin' you was to 'ave a little bway—a dear little bway—an 'sposin' 'e was to val'?—Well, there, when you come to think of it 'tis a sad an' tichin' idaya, a wisht idaya 'tis, vor a poor little innacent chiel to val' into a weel 'an—(boo-oo!)—git drowned.'

An' mother zot down 'pon another chair an' begun to go awn so bad's the maid.

Jis then, in come father.

"Ello,' 'e zes, arter starin' a minit or zo to the pair o' min, zot there zide by zide, rockin' tu an' fraw. "Ello; be I in my own 'ouze, or bain't I? What little game's this gwain awn yer, I should like to knaw? Is it what they cal' a pantamine?'

'Aw, mother,' sobbed Mary Jane, 'you tell father; I'm sure I an't got the face tu.'

'Wull, father,' zed 'er mother, 'I'll tell 'ee all about

it, but dont 'ee be angry wi' the maid, 'er can't 'elp it You knaw funny things will come into anybody's aic sometimes—pertic'ly into maid's 'aids—an' Mary Jane was workin' away so well's iver, when all to wance 'e begun to think to 'erzel': "Sposin' 'er an' Tom wa married, an' sposin' they was to 'ave a dear little bway an' sposin' 'e was to git rinnin' about out'n court, an' sposin' 'e was to val' into the weel an' git—(boo-oo!)—drowned".'

'Git out wi' your cakey ole nonsense,' sez 'e; 'you'm tellin' properly waik an' cabby. I niver zeed nor yerd jis' a pair of old sillies in all my life, wi' yer "sposin' 'er was to git married, an' yer sposin' this an' sposin' that." Why, Tom 'athn' axed the maid 'it 'ath a? An' what's more 'e dithn' seem in no 'urry about it nuther. 'E's mortal backward in comin' voreward if you ax me. But what was it you zed the chiel du'd? Val'd into the weel an' got drowned? Wull, arter all, 'tis ruther a sad thought vor a poor little annacent chiel to—to—val' into a weel an—an—'

Wull, now, I knaw you want believe it, but I'll be dazz'd if father didn' draa vore a chair bezide min, an' zit down, an' begin to pipe 'is eye tu!

That very instant who should 'appen to come in but Tom 'iszel'! The sight of the dree o' min zot there side by side, an' rocking tu an' fraw, knackn' all to a 'eap. Arter starin' a minnit like anybody strook zo, 'e zes,

'Whativer's the mainin' of this? Is it a 'zylum I'm come tu, or a raivival meetin', or what?'

'Aw, mother, you tell'n,' sez Mary Jane. 'I couldn't tell father, an' I'm sure I couldn't tell Tom.'

Zo mother went all dru the story wance more—the sposin' they was to git married, an' the sposin' they was to 'ave a little bway, an' sposin' 'e was to val' into the weel, an' all the rest o' 't.

Bevore 'er could finish Tom baust out,

'Well, if you bain't the dree beggest sillies I've iver come across in all my born days I'll—I'll niver go to baid more. Gaw! "Sposin' us was married! " Gud law! Purty vorward I cal' that when I an't aiven axed 'er to name the day 'it. Countin' chickin bevore they'm 'atched, that is! I'll tell 'ee what 'tis: ruther than

marry into jis' a family of fules, I'll be a bachelor to the end of my days. Zo yer's off, an' 'ceps I vind dree begger sillies than you be—which idn't very likely—I swear I'll niver darken your door again.'

Zo away went Tom, slammin' the door arter'n, an' growlin' an' mutterin' like a bear wi' a zore 'aid.

'The gurt zart-'aided fules,' 'e keept aun zayin' to 'iszel,' 'I shall niver vind dree jis' sillies again as they be vor sartain; no, net if I sarch from Dan to Bairshaiba. 'Tis all auver betwain Mary Jane an' me for iver-an'-iver-amen.'

But arter a little while 'e begun to cule down a bit, an' thort to 'iszel' 'e might jis' so well keep 'is eyes oppen an' zee what fules there might be gwain about.

'Twadn' long before 'e 'ad to pass dru a farm court, an' there the fuss thing 'e 'appened to zee was a bway powerin' some bowlin' water into a zinc traw.

'What be 'ee duin' that vor?' 'e zes to the bway.

''Old yer tongue can't 'ee,' zes the bway, 'I'm tryin' a 'speriment.'

'Aw; trying a 'speriment be 'ee?'

'Iss, I'm gi'ein' the 'ens bowlin' water to zee if I can't git min to lay bowled eggs! '

'Git out you gurt silly,' sez Tom; 'why, thee'rt a begger fule than Mary Jane! '

Zo 'e went on again, an' come tu a 'aystack; an' up 'pon tap o'n there was a man tryin' to pule up a cow wi' a rope.

'Whativer be 'ee about up there?' axed Tom.

'Where's yer eyes?' says 'e. 'Can't 'ee zee what I'm 'bout? Tryin' to pule up theze yer cow to gi'e 'er some 'ay to be sure.'

'Git out,' sez Tom; 'thee'rt a begger fule than Mary Jane. Why dissn' draw the 'ay down to the cow, net try to pule the cow up to the 'ay?'

'To be sure,' sez the man; 'I niver thort o' that.'

Zo aun went Tom again, sayin' to 'iszel',

'Wull, I'll be darned if there 'idn' tu begger sillies than Mary Jane I've mit wey a'ready; I widn' zay I shan't come across a third arter all.'

Thicky night, as it 'appened, 'e'd got to share 'is baid rume auver to Bangham wi' another chap. In the

mornin', when 'e oppened 'is eyes, there was theze yer t'other chap out 'pon the floor, 'oldin" is trousers in 'is 'ands, an' takin' frantic laips up in the air both veet to wance, an' comin' down again thump 'pon the planchin'.

Tom watchn' a minute or zo, an' then axed what 'e thort 'e was duin' 'o.

'Cant 'ee zee what I'm duin' 'o?' 'e snapped back. 'Tryin' to git into theze yer pair o' trousers bain't I?'

'Git out you gurt gawk,' zes Tom, 'that idn' the way to du't; why dissn' put een wan vute tu a time? 'Tis so aisy's shillin' pais then.'

'To be sure,' sez the chap; 'what a gurt silly I be; I niver thort o' that.'

'Wull, there,' sez Tom, 'if I an't a vound dree begger sillies than Mary Jane then arter all. I'll be dazz'd if I don't go an' make it up wi' the maid, same's I zed I would, if so be 'er's willin'.'

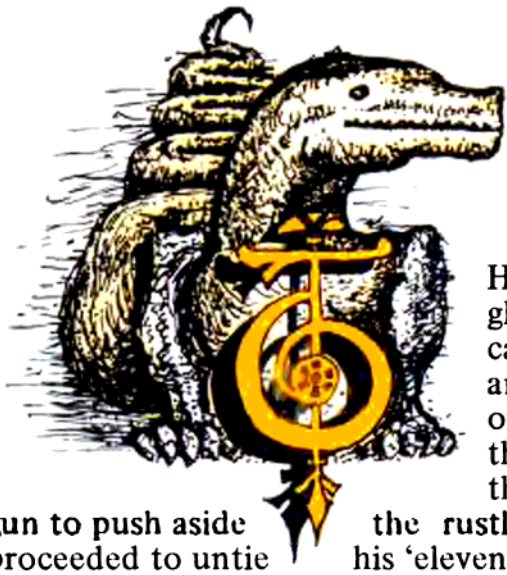
Zo off 'e started to wance, an' they made it up, an' sure 'nuff they did git married, an' they did 'ave a little bway; in fac', in cousse o' time, they had sivver little bways an' maidens tu.

* * *

I were going along the road one night an' I seed a feller coming along towards me, and I thought it were 'ee and 'ee thought it were I. And we got a little closer, an' I knowed it were 'ee and 'ee knowed it were I. An' we got a little nearer, an' I were sure it were 'ee an 'ee were sure it were I. An' us got a little closer still, and I were darned positive it were 'ee and 'ee were darned positive it were I. And we comed right up to each other, and it weren't neither of us!

The South East

THE KNUCKER OF LYMINSTER



THE hedger laid his gloves atop of the carefully-wiped bill, and, settling himself on the bank where the crisp tongues of the primroses had begun to push aside the rustle of drifted leaves, proceeded to untie his 'elevener'.

'They do say,' he observed, deliberately, as he spread his red and white spotted handkerchief across his knees, 'that a dunnamany years ago there was a gert dragon lived in that big pond there—Knucker his name was, and Knucker Hole we calls it today. And thisyer ole dragon, you know, he uster goo spannelling about the Erooks by night to see what he could pick up for supper-like—few horses, or cows, maybe—he'd snap 'em up soon as look at 'em. Then bimeby he took to sitting top o' Causeway, and anybody come along there, he'd lick 'em up, like a toad licking flies off a stone.

'So what with that, and him swimming in the River otherwhile and sticking his ugly face up agin the winders in Shipyard when people was sitting having their tea, things was in a tidy old Humphrey up Arndel way, no bounds.

'So the Mayor of Arndel, as was then, he offered a reward for anyone as ud put an end to en. I misremember how much t'was, but something pretty big, I reckon. Howsumever, everybody was so feared on en,

that they was onaccountable backward in coming forward, as you might say.

'So Mayor, he doubled the reward: and this time a young chap from Wick put up for it. Now some people says he was a Arndel man; but that an't true. Young Jim Puttock his name was, and he came from Wick. I've lived at Toddington all my life, so I reckon I oughter know. Sides, my great-aunt, Judith, what lived down along there where you turns up by they gert ellum trees, just t' other side o' the line, uster say that when she was a gal, there was a marn lived 'long o' them as was courting a gal that 'ventually married a kind of a descendant of this Jim Puttock.

'Let be how t'wull, this Jim Puttock he goos to Mayor, and tells him his plan. And Mayor he says everybody must give en what he asks, and never mind the expense, 'cause they oughter be thankful, for getting rid of the Knucker.

'So he goos to the smith and horders a gert iron pot—'bout so big.

'And he goos to the miller and asks en for so much flour.

'And he goos to the woodmen and tells 'em to build a gert stack-fire in the middle o' the Square.

'And when t'was done he set to and made the biggest pudden' that was ever seen.

'And when t'was done—not that t'was quite done—bit sad in the middle, I reckon, but that was all the better, like—they heaved en on to a timber-tug, and somebody lent en a team to draw it, and off he goos, bold as a lion.

'All the people followed en as far as the bridge, but they dursn't goo no furder, for there was ole Knucker, lying just below Bill Dawes'es. Least his head was, but his neck and body-parts lay all along up the hill, past the station, and he was tearing up the trees in Batworth Park with his tail.

'And he sees thisyer tug a-coming, and he sings out, affable-like,

'How do, Man?'

'How do, Dragon,' says Jim.

'What you got there?' says Dragon, sniffing.

'Pudden,' says Jim.

'Pudden?' says Knucker. 'What be that?'

'Just you try,' says Jim.

'And he didn't want no more telling—pudden, horses, tug, they was gone in a blink. Jimmy ud agone, too, only he hung on to one o' they trees what blew down last year.

'T'weren't bad,' says Knucker, licking his chops.

'Like another?' says Jim.

'Shudn't mind,' says he.

'Right,' says Jim. 'Bring 'ee one Sadernoon.'

'But he knew better'n that, surelye.

''Fore long they hears en rowling about, and roaring and bellering fit to bust hissel. And as he rowls, he chucks up gert clods, big as houses, and trees and stones and all manner, he did lash about so with his tail.

'But that Jim Puttock, he weren't afeared, not he. He took a gallon or so with his dinner, and goos off to have a look at en.

'When he sees en coming, ole Knucker roars out, 'Don't you dare bring me no more o' that 'ere pudden, young marn! '

'Why?' says Jim. 'What's matter?'

'Collywobbles,' says the Dragon. 'Do set so heavy on me I can't stand up, nohows in de wurreld.'

'Shudn't bolt it so,' says Jim, 'but never mind, I got a pill here, soon cure that.'

'Where?' says Knucker.

'Here,' says Jim.

'And he ups with an axe he'd held behind his back and cuts off his head.'

The hedger took a long pull at his tea-bottle, and lapsed into silence.

'That's all?'

'That's all, Sir. But if you goos through that liddle gate there into the churchyard, you'll see his grave. By the porch, left-hand side, in the corner, like, between the porch and the wall o' the church.'

And, sure enough, the grave is there, and covered with a great coned slab of Horsham stone. But it is

without inscription, and though many are proud to show it, this hedger was the only one I ever met who gave the hero 'a local habitation and name.' To all the rest he was simply 'The Man who killed the Dragon.'

Offham says of Arundel:

Arundel mullet—stinking fish,
Eats it off a dirty dish.

Arundel replies:

Offham dingers, churchbells ringers
Only taters for your Sunday dinners.

THE SWEATING FAIRIES

WHEN I was a liddle boy and lived with my gurt uncle, old Jan Druly, dere was an old place dey used to call Burlow Castle, near Arlington. It warn't much ov a castle—onny a few old walls like—but it had been a famous place in de time when dere was a king in every county. Well, whatever it had been afore, at the time I speak on, it was de very hem of a place for fairisees, and nobody didn't like to goo by it ahter dark for fear on um.

One dee as Chols Packham, uncle's grandfather (I've heerd uncle tell de story a dunna-many times) was at plough up dere, jest about cojer time, he heerd a queer

sort of a noise right down under de groun' dat frightened him uncommonly, sure-lie.

'Hullow,' says Chols to his mate, 'did you hear dat, Harry?'

'Yahs,' says Harry, 'what was it?'

'I reckon 'twas a fairisee,' says uncle's grandfather.

'No, 'twarn't,' says Harry, 'dere aren't no fairisees now. Dere was once—at Jerusalem, but dey was full-growed people, and has been dead hundreds o' years.'

Well, while dey was a-talking, Chols heerd de noise agin,

'Help! Help! Help! '

Chols was terribly afeard, but he plucked up heart enough to ax what was wanted.

'I've been a-bakin',' said de liddle voice, 'and have broke my peel' (dat's a sort o' thing dat's used to put loaves into de oven wid), 'and I dunno what upon de airth to do.'

Under de airth, Chols thought she ought to ha' said, but howsomever he didn't say so. And being a tender-hearted kind of a chap dat didn't like anybody to be in trouble, he made answer without any preamble,

'Put it up, and I'll try to mend it.'

No sooner said dan done; dere was a chink in de groun', for de season was dryish, and sure enough, through dat chink dere come up a liddle peel not bigger dan a brencheese knife. Chols couldn't hardly help laughin', it was such a monstrous *liddle* peel, not big enough to hold a gingey-bread nut hardly; but howsomever he thought 'twas to offend any of dem liddle customers. So he outs wud a tin-tack or two as he happened to have in his weskit pocket, and wud de help ov his cojer knife for a hammer, and his knee for a bench, he soon mended de peel and put it down de chink.

Harry was back-turned while dis a-gooin' on, and when he come back Chols up and told him all about it; but Harry said 'twas all stuff, and he didn't believe a word consarnin' on't, for Master Pettit, de parish clerk, had told him 'twas all a galushon, and dere warn't no fairisees nowadays.

But howsomever he proved to be wrong more ways dan one, for next dee at cojer time when Harry was back-turned agin, Chols Packham heerd de voice as afore a-comin' up out ov de chink, and a-sayin',

'Look here! '

Well, Chols turned roun', not quite so much frightened dis time, and what should be see stanin' close agin de chink but a liddle bowl full of summat dat smelled a hem-an'-all better dan small beer.

'Hullow! ' thinks Chols to hisself, 'dis is worth havin',' he thinks.

So he tasted it, and at last drunk it all up; and he 'llowed dat of all de stuff he ever tasted, dat was de very best. He was a-gooin' to save de liddle bowl to show Harry dat dere certainly was fairies, but whilst he was a-thinking about it, all of a sudden de bowl slipped out of his hands and dashed itself into a hundred pieces, so dat Harry onny laughed at him, and said 'twas naun but a cracked basin.

But howsomever, Harry got sarved out for bein' so unbelievin', for he fell into a poor war, and couldn't goo to work as usual, and he got so tedious bad dat he fell away to mere skin and boan and no doctors couldn't do him no good, and dat very day twelmont he died, at de very same hour dat de fairisees was fust heerd, and dat he spoke agin 'em.

An ol' brother of my wife's gurt granmother see some fairisees once, and 'twould ha' been a power better if so be he hadn't never seen 'em, or leastways never offended 'em. I'll tell ye how it happened.

Jeems Meppom—dat was his naum—Jeems was a liddle farmer, and used to thresh his own corn. His barn stood in a very elenge lonesome place, a goodish bit from de house, and de fairisees used to come dere a nights and thresh out some wheat and wuts for him, so dat de hep o' threshed corn was ginnerly bigger in de morning dan what he left it overnight.

Well, ye see, Mas' Meppom thought dis a liddle odd, and didn't rightly know what to make on't. So, bein' an out-and-out bold chep, dat didn't fear man nor devil, as de sayin' is, he made up his mind dat he'd

goo over some night to see how 'twas managed.

Well, accordingly he went out rather airly in de evenin', and laid up behind de mow for a long while, till he got rather tired and sleepy, and thought 'twaunt no use a-watchin' no longer. It was gettin' pretty handy to midnight, and he thought how he'd goo home to bed. But jest as he was upon de move, he heerd a odd sort of a soun' comin' toe-ards de barn, and so he stopped to see what it was. He looked out of de strah, and what should he catch sight on but a couple of liddle cheps about eighteen inches high or dereaway come into de barn without uppening de doors. Dey pulled off dere jackets and begun to thresh wud two liddle frails as dey had brought wud 'em, at de hem of a rate.

Mas' Meppom would ha' been froughten if dey had been bigger, but as dey was such tedious liddle fellers, he couldn't hardly help bustin' right out a-laffin'. Howsomever, he pushed a handfull of strah into his mouth and so managed to kip quiet a few minutes a-lookin' at 'em—thump, thump; thump, thump; as right as a clock.

At last dey got rader tired and left off to rest derselves, and one on 'em said, in a liddle squeakin' voice, as it might ha' bin a mouse a-talkin',

'I say, Puck, I tweat; do you tweat?'

At dat, Jeems couldn't contain hisself no-how, but set up a loud haw-haw; and jumpin' up from de strah hollered out,

'I'll tweat ye, ye liddle rascals! What bisness ha' you got in my barn?'

Well upon dis, de fairisees picked up der frails and cut away right by him, and as dey passed by him he felt sich a queer pain in his head as if somebody had gi'en him a lamentable hard thump wud a hammer, dat knocked him down as flat as a flounder. How long he laid dere he never rightly knowed, but it must ha' bin a goodish bit, for when he come to, 'twas gettin' deelight.

He couldn't hardly contrive to doddle home, and when he did he looked so tedious bad dat his wife sent for de doctor dirackly. But bless ye, dat waunt no use;

and old Jeems Meppom knowed it well enough. De doctor told him to kip up his sperits, beein' 'twas onny a fit he had had from bein' amost smothered wud de handful of strah and kippin' his laugh down. But Jeems knowed better.

"Tain't no use, Sir,' he says, says he, to de doctor, 'de cuss of de fairisees is uppon me, and all de stuff in your shop can't do me no good.'

And Mas' Meppom was right, for about a year ahtewuds he died, poor man, sorry enough dat he'd ever intarfered wud things dat didn't consarn him. Poor ol' feller, he lays buried in de churchyard over yonder—leastways, so I've heerd my wife's mother say—under de bank jest where de bed of snowdraps grows.

An' I tell yer one last thing. There wer an ol' Mrs Jasper, who some said wer a witch. She knew a charm to make de fairisees come; an' she showed it to a liddle gal, who later became a nanny.

You had to do it on a moonlight night when the pollen was just ripe on the catkins. She would stand a few yards away in a woodland clearing with two small branches in her hands. The gold dust would come flying from the catkins as she waved them gently, and she sang a little song over and over in a low drawlin' husky voice—just as though she was coaxin' 'em,

Come in the stillness,
Come in the night;
Come soon,
And bring delight.
Beckoning, beckoning,
Left hand and right;
Come now,
Ah, come tonight!

THE HYTER SPRITES

ONE of my mother's aunts away back married an Essex man they called Hyter John and he were a packman. There wadn't no carts their way, tracks was all mixey-miery and yew did need a good pack-'oss to get a load safe droo they there moors. Venses they did call 'en with gurt reeds and rhines and deep holes across the highways, all a-brim with muck. Proper dangerous 'twas, folk cud be a-drownded there—so they was all glad of a proper, careful packman to fetch and carry their goods to market each week and never lose nothing vor 'en.

There were one dryish bit as was only walked by daylight—sand and gravel 'twas with high banks full of burries of they liddle, brown sand-swallows. They'd fly out from under foot as 'ee passed and someat else would fly too. All sandy coloured they was with green eyes, but nobody bided to see 'en close tew.

Hyter sprites was the name they went by, but nobody talked about 'en at all—'twadn't considered lucky, any more than Somerset folk do talk too free about the pixies. Reckon they was some kind of kin. They could appear man-size to play their tricks but most times they was about knee-high. And if 'ee had to travel night-times, what with they reeds and water and green eyes all a-watch, it wadn't very nice.

Hyter John and Mag his mare didn't mind 'en a bit—not since they wade into a bad place and fish out one o' their babies as had valled in, poor liddle dear. Zo they liked John more'n a bit though he never seed more than the one liddle baby—but night-times in winter there'd be green eyes all along keeping Mag safe on road.

So Mother's girt-aunt knowed he was a-being watched over and was real thankful. You see there were someone else a-watching his comings and goings—and they designed to ill-wish him and break his good name. It were a sly, wicked creature called Cunning Borley and kept well away vrom, and he waited for years to catch a Hyter sprite for a soul-slave—and then it were only a little baby sprite too young to be of much use, and being in a wicked rage he drowed it into the black waters and left 'en to drownd. Well, Hyter John and Mag got 'en out and left 'en safe vor the mother to vind, and they Hyter sprites didn't never vorget and Hyter John he prospered in his honesty.

Folk trusted 'en and he always kept in mind what his wife say (and 'tis what I tell 'ee, mind),

Give a Promise
Live a Promise
Do very well.

Make a Promise
Break a Promise
Go down to Hell.

So Cunning Borley he tried all ways to trick him into a broken promise, but he just couldn't do it.

Then one May-tide the rain come down all day and evening too and Hyter John were clarty belt-high and Mag went belly-deep every step. But vor all that they got all the way to market and sold they goods and start for home with the market money and two little kegs of brandy vor Squire a-swung on Hyter John's belt as he walked. He could ha' rode but Mag would ha' been shoulder-deep then and slow as a hod-me-dod and he were being very careful indeed.

My mother's great-aunt she tells him that morning, 'When I went out at daybreak there were a vuzz-peg going widdershins round our cow and calf so I run vor salt-box and drowed a handvul at un. Yew orter zeed thic vuzz-peg make vor geat! Couldn' zee en in lane when I had a look-see, but Cunning Borley he happed to be passing by and cussing terrible. Limping bad he were. There were a vlat iron kept in zalt-box. S'pose I drowed that too. Now promise not to go anywhere with the market money but leave they kegs vor Squire and come straight home.'

And Hyter John he promised.

But half-a-mile vrom Squire's, just by the inn, Mag near lost a shoe and shoes cost money.

So Hyter John he shouts for the ostler to tap it back while he stands all a-drench in the rain holding Mag. But no ostler came. They was all fast asleep by the gurt vire. So Hyter John he tie up Mag for a whips-while and go in to get ostler and he feels the heat of tha vire and next thing he knows is someone a-shaking him and there was the very smallest serving maid all in a sand-coloured gown.

'Yew've lost your labour Hyter John and your good name too.'

And when the mist and heat cleat vrom his sight he found the market money and kegs was gone.

'What will you do?' say she.

'Go and tell Squire. I must pay 'en back every penny of it. I broke my promise to them all.'

'You are ill-wished,' say she.

'No matter, I broke my promise.'

And out into the rain again he went and vound Mag zo clean washed and half-drownded as he were, and off he went to Squire and then trudged whoame well-nigh heart-broke to tell his wife.

She ups and comforts 'en.

'Squire be a merciful man. We'll earn enough between us to pay all back so soon as may be.'

Then she say sudden,

'What colour was her eyes?'

'Sort of green like. And she were little and in brown.'

'We'll get to pay every bit back, never fear, m dear.'

And they did, between 'en.

She made rush mats and hats to sell so fast you'd ha thought she had lots of helpers, and John he mak thatching spars and pegs and cut loads of new rushe for the town floors and Mag seemed to go dry-sho there and back so vast as a galloping pony. And ever penny was paid back—poor folk first and Squire last

'All in seven days,' says Squire. 'Somebody like you both. Be off and get your old mare shod with a criss-cross and Cunning Borley can't bother you. We'l get him yet—or Somebody Else will.'

The next time Mag went past the burries 'twas a fine May night and what should they hear but twittering voices,

'Hyter John, Hyter John,
Look in the burrow,
You'll be as rich as a king,
Tomorrow.'

Hyter John looked and there were Squire's two kegs, still full. Cunning Borley had come limping to take them away from where he'd hid them. He yelled with envy and rage to see himself found out. Then he waved the bag of market money, shouting,

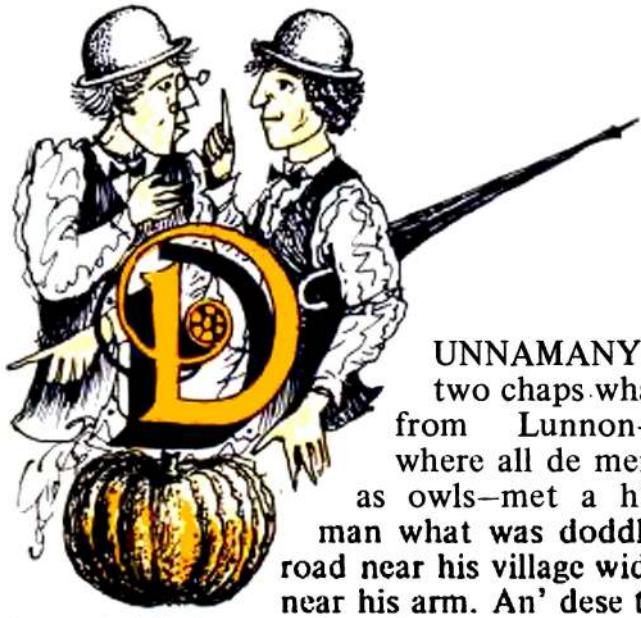
'But I got all this! '

Would 'ee believe there come a cloud of they little sand-swallows a-blattering and a-blinding him so that he steps back right off path and into the gurtest, deepest pool of 'en all.

Well, Hyter John and Mag gets him out after he come up dree times all a-muck and John gets the money back. Then Hyter John and Mag go whoame happy.

And Cunning Borley he had company every step he limped whoame and it laughed and laughed and had hundreds of green eyes.

THE MARE'S EGG



UNNAMANY year ago, two chaps what had come from Lunnon—a pleace where all de men be as wise as owls—met a h'old Sussex man what was doddling along a road near his village wid a pumpkin near his arm. An' dese two Lunnon chaps didn't know what dis pumpkin was, as dey had never sin de loikes of un afore. So one on 'em says to de other, he says,

'Let's see what dis here ol' fellow's got under 'is arm.'

So dey goos up to un an' says,

'Good marnin', mister,' dey says.

'Good marnin',' says de ol' chap, friendly-like.

'What be dat under yer arm?' says de Lunnoners.

'Dat be a mare's egg,' says de ol' man.

'Dat so?' says de Lunnoners, believin' un loike lambs. 'We've never sin one so foine afore.'

'Yes,' says de ol' chap, 'dere be a mort o' common ones aroun', but dis 'ere one be a thoroughbred, an' dat's why 'tis so gurt an' foine.'

'Will you sell un?' says de Lunnoners.

'Wall,' says de ol' chap, hesitating-like, 'I don't mind if I do, only I be dubbersome if you'll gi' me what I wants for un; I ain't a mind to take less dan a golden sovrin' fur dis 'ere thoroughbred mare's egg.'

So arter dunnamuch talk dese 'ere Lunnon chaps dey gi' un what he axed, an' so he guv 'em de pumpkin, an' he says,

'Mind ye carry it careful,' he says, "cos 'twill hatch pretty soon, I rackon.'

'All right,' says de Lunnoners, 'we'll be careful.'

So off dey goos over de fields wud de mare's egg; and prensley him what was a-carryin' of it ketches his foot in a hole in de groun' so dat he dropped de pumpkin all of a sudden, an' dat starts a hare from de bushes, so dat it rip-an'-run down de hill. De chaps was dat vlothered dat dey was sure dat de mare's egg was hatched, so dey shouts out to some men what was workin' at the bottom of de hill,

'Hi! Stop our colt! Stop our colt! '

But it never was caught.

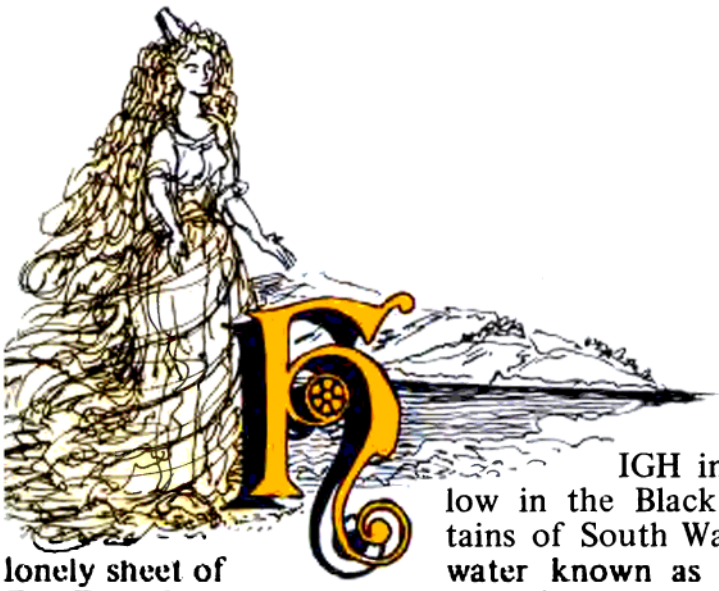
Wales

THE LADY OF LLYN Y FAN FACH

Yr hen wr tlwyd o'r cornel,
Gan ei dad a glywod chwedel,
A chan ei dad fe glywod yntau
Ac ar ei ol mi gofiais innau.

The old grey man in the corner
From his father heard a tale,
Which from his father he had heard,
And after them I recalled.

* * *



HIGH in a hollow in the Black Mountains of South Wales is a lonely sheet of water known as Llyn y Fan Fach. In a farm across the hills from this lake there lived at Blaensawde near Llandeusant, Carmarthenshire, a widow with her only son Gronw. When the boy was old enough to look after the cattle, he would often take them to graze in the sweet grass beside the lake.

One day, as Gronw was sitting by the water, watching the cows cropping the long grass, he was surprised to hear a soft splashing coming from the lake. He looked round and, to his astonishment, saw a young maiden

sitting on the calm smooth water, combing her long tresses, the water serving as a mirror. She was the most beautiful creature that mortal eyes could behold.

Suddenly she noticed the young man standing at the margin of the lake, staring at her and holding out the crust of barley bread and cheese that was his lunch. The lady came slowly gliding across the lake towards him, yet as he went to touch her, she held back, saying,

'Cras dy fara,
Nid hawdd fy nala.'

'Hard baked is thy bread,
'Tis hard to catch me.'

With that she dived beneath the water and disappeared, leaving poor Gronw to rue his luck. For he had fallen deeply in love with the lady of the lake.

On his return home, he told his mother all about the lovely vision he had seen, and asked her advice: how was he to tempt her? The widow told him to take some 'toes' or unbaked dough the next time in his pocket: there must have been some spell connected with the 'bara cras' or hard-baked bread that repelled the lady.

Next morning, before the sun's rays shone above the peaks of the Fans, Gronw was standing by the lake with the 'toes' in his hand, anxiously waiting for the maiden to appear. Hour after hour he stared into the waters, and hour after hour there was nothing to be seen save the ripples raised by the breeze and the sunbeams dancing on the water. By late afternoon he was ready to turn his footsteps homewards when, to his great joy, the maiden appeared again above the sunlit waters of the lake.

She seemed even more lovely than before, and Gronw eagerly held out the unbaked dough. But with a shake of her lovely head, she refused him, saying,

'Llaith dy fara,
Ti ni fynna.'

'Unbaked is thy bread,
I will not have thee.'

This time, before vanishing beneath the lake, she smiled such a beguiling smile that Gronw's heart forbade him to despair. As he walked home, the remembrance of her smile consoled him with the hope that when next she appeared she might not refuse his gift.

He told his mother all that had passed, and she suggested that his bread next time should be but slightly baked. So next day, long before first light, Gronw was walking the water margin of the lake with the half-baked bread held in his hand, staring fixedly into the smooth waters.

The sheep and goats browsed on the steep sides of the Fan; the cows strayed amongst the rocks and boulders; rain and sunshine came and passed away. But all were unheeded by the youth, so impelled by love was he. Morning wore on to afternoon, and afternoon to evening. But nothing was to be seen save the scudding waves and the rain dimples in the dark waters of the lake.

Shades of night began to fall, and Gronw was about to depart in bitter disappointment when, casting a last glance across the lake, he suddenly saw some jet black cows walking upon the water. The sight of these strange beasts raised his hopes of seeing the lovely lady of the lake. And sure enough, it was not long before the maiden reappeared: and she was lovelier than ever.

As she approached the lad, he waded into the cool waters of the lake to meet her, holding out the half-baked bread. This time she took his gift with a grateful smile, and even allowed him to lead her by the hand on to the shore. Gronw completely lost his tongue. With bowed head and scarlet cheeks, he just stared shyly at her feet, noticing, by the way, that her left sandal lace was broken.

At long last he recovered his wits and, looking straight into her hazel eyes, said,

'Dear Lady of the Lake, I love you more than I can tell and would beg you to be my wife.'

He pleaded with her so earnestly that in the end she gave her promise to be his bride. There was, however, one condition. She would marry and live with him until he struck her:

'Tri ergyd diachos.'

'Three needless blows.'

And if he ever should happen to strike her three such blows, she would leave him forever. Of course, Gronw protested that he would never strike her; he would sooner cut off his hand than employ it in such a way.

As she loosed her hand from his, she suddenly darted away and dived into the lake. Thinking that she had teased him cruelly and was now gone forever, Gronw was so grief-stricken that he resolved to drown himself in the selfsame lake. He hastened to the top of a large rock overhanging the lake and was about to jump into the water's depths when he heard a shout,

'Stay, bold youth, come here.'

As he turned, he saw a white-haired old man, as stately as a king, accompanied by two lovely maidens; all three emerged out of the lake. As Gronw came down to meet them, the old man addressed him, saying,

'You wish to wed one of my daughters. So be it. I shall not oppose you, for my daughter says she's willing. But first, to prove your love, you must tell me the one you've pledged to marry.'

Gronw's heart felt light. How could he fail to recognise his beloved lady of the lake? Yet when he looked at the two maids, he was confused: they were as perfectly alike as two petals of a rose. And if perchance he fixed upon the wrong one all would be forever lost.

The thought that he might pronounce wrongly all but drove the lad to distraction and stayed his pointing finger. He had almost given up the task when one of the two maids slightly moved her left foot. This motion, slight though it was, did not escape his eager gaze, and looking down he noticed the torn sandal lace upon the dainty foot. With a cry of joy, he immediately took her hand.

'You have chosen rightly,' said the stern old man. 'Be a kind and loving husband to her and I shall grant as dowry as many cows, sheep, goats, pigs and horses as she can count in a single breath. But mind this: if you but strike three needless blows, she shall return to me forever.'

Gronw was overjoyed. And his bride began to count in fives:

'Un, dau, tri, pedwar, pump.
Un, dau, tri, pedwar, pump.
Un, dau, tri, pedwar, pump,'

as many times as she could until her breath gave out. Straightaway, as many cows as she had counted came lowing from the lake.

Then she counted the sheep:

'Un, dau, tri, pedwar, pump.
Un, dau, tri, pedwar, pump.
Un, dau, tri, pedwar, pump.'

She went on counting until she had to draw a breath. In the twinkling of an eye, as many sheep as she had counted came bleating from the lake. In the same way, she counted goats, pigs and horses, and an equal team of every kind ranged themselves upon the shore.

The old man and his second daughter meanwhile had vanished, and Gronw took his lady's hand and led her to his farm. All the animals followed on behind.

In the passing of the days, Gronw and his bride were married and afterwards went to live at a farm called Esgair Llaethdy, about a mile from the village of Myddvai. There they lived in happiness for several years, and had three handsome sons.

When the youngest boy was ten years old, Gronw and his wife Nelferch—for that was the lake maiden's name—were invited to a christening in the next village. They started out walking from their farm. The day was hot, the christening far, and soon Nelferch was footsore, complaining she could walk no farther.

'If you do not wish to walk,' Gronw said, 'then I shall return home and fetch a horse for you.'

His wife consented and asked him to bring her gloves which she had left behind. He went back home, brought the horse and gloves, and was more than a little tired and hot from his journey.

As he went to help his wife sit astride the horse, she suddenly said,

'I've changed my mind. Let us go back home instead.'

At this unexpected turn, Gronw lost his temper briefly and, before he could stop himself, had struck her lightly with the gloves, saying,

'Dos, do, Nelferch. Go on, go on.'

His wife mounted the horse and sighed deeply.

'That, my husband, is the first needless blow,' she said, and she reminded him of the promise he had given when he pledged to wed her.

Though he was angry with himself, Gronw consoled himself that he still had two chances left and he was determined never to strike his wife again.

Several years later, when they were together at a wedding, the wife suddenly burst into tears and sobbed as if a heart would break. At once the joy and laughter of the guests all stopped and faces turned to her.

'What is wrong with you, dear wife?' asked Gronw gently.

'I weep,' she said, 'because these two people are entering a life of trouble; they are not suited for each other.'

The guests were all amazed and some were angry at such unguarded words. Gronw, who had drunk more than one glass of wholesome beer, flushed red and shook his wife firmly by the shoulder.

Nelferch stopped weeping and gazed sadly at her husband through tear-filled eyes.

'O my husband,' she sighed, 'you have struck me the second needless blow.'

After that, Gronw was on his guard day and night. He was so happy in his love that he knew his heart would break if one more chance blow took her from him. Years passed on, and their children had grown up and become particularly clever young men.

It so happened, however, that one day they were together at a funeral where, in the very middle of the service, Nelferch began to laugh so loudly that all the mourners stared at her in shocked disbelief. Her poor husband whispered loudly to her,

'Hush, wife, have a thought for the mourners! '

But she laughed even more loudly than before. In his confusion, Gronw pulled her roughly from the grave. At once he realised what he'd done and hid his face in his hands.

Nelferch stopped laughing at once. Turning to her husband, she said,

'I was laughing because people when they die go out of trouble. Now, my beloved husband, the last blow has been struck. You had fair warning; our marriage is at an end. Farewell, I must leave you forever.'

Then she started off towards Esgair Llaethdy, where she summoned all her livestock to her, calling each one by name. First she called the cows:

'Mu wlfrech, Moelfrech,
Mu olfrech, Gwynfrech,
Pedair cae tonn-frech,
Yr hen wynebwen,
A'r las Geigen,
Gyda'r Tarw Gwyn,
O lys y Brenin;
A'r llo du bach,
Sydd ar y bach,
Dere dithau, yn iach adre.'

'Brindle cow, white speckled,
Spotted cow, bold freckled,
From your four green meadows mottled,
Old white face,
And grey Geringer,
And the White Bull,
From the royal court,
And the little black calf,
Though suspended on a hook,
All come, and follow me home.'

They all immediately obeyed the summons of their mistress. Even the little black calf, suspended from the pantry wall, came to life again and, descending from the hook, put on his hide and walked away with the rest of the cows, sheep, goats, pigs and horses. Away

they all went, following their mistress to the lake from which they had come those many years before.

When they had crossed the six miles to the lake, they walked in without a halt, each and every one. They disappeared beneath the placid waters; the only trace that was left was a furrow on the bank made by a horse, still drawing a plough behind him as he plunged into the lake. The furrow remains there by the lakeside to this day.

All reason now went from Gronw's life. He followed his wife despairingly down to the lake and, overwhelmed by grief, walked on into the lake behind her.

His body was never found.

The three sons spent many, many days and nights, keeping a vigil at the lakeside, hoping they might see their lost mother and father once again. Their devotion was at last rewarded, for one day, some weeks later, Nelferch appeared at one side of the lake still called Llidiad y Meddygon, the Doctors' Gate. There she glided over the smooth surface of the lake towards her eldest son, Rhiwallon, just as she had done many years before to his father.

She told him to set aside his grief, for he and his brothers would henceforth have a mission on the earth: to relieve the pain and suffering of the people. And she gave him a pouch of instructions for healing people and curing their disease. Then, promising to meet him and his brothers whenever her counsel was most needed, she vanished beneath the lake.

On several occasions after that she met her sons near the banks of the lake, and once she even went with them on their walk home as far as a place that to this day bears the name of Pant y Meddygon—the Doctors' Dell—where she pointed out the healing herbs and plants.

Profiting from their mother's teaching, the three sons became the most skilful doctors in the land. They set up practice at Myddvai for the healing of those who needed help, and they willingly gave aid free to those too poor to pay for it. From that time on, the fame of the doctors of Myddvai spread across the land and is remembered to this day.

EGG-SHELL POTTAGE

IN the parish of Trevegl-wys, near Llanid-loes, in the county of Montgomery, there is a little shepherd's cot that is commonly called Twt y Cwmrws, the Place of Strife; and this is the story of how it got its name.

The inhabitants of the cottage were a wife and husband, and they had born to them twins, whom they nursed with great care and tenderness.

Some months after their birth, the wife was called out to the house of a neighbour; and she had to leave the babes alone. Even though she had not far to go, she did not like to leave her children by themselves in their cradle, even for a minute, as her house stood all alone, and there were many tales of goblins or the *Tylwyth Teg* about the neighbourhood. But she went and returned as soon as she could.

On the way back, however, she was not a little scared to see some of the old elves of the blue petticoat, as they were usually called, even though it was mid-day. And yet when she got back to her house she was relieved to find all was it was before.

After some time had passed, however, the good people began to wonder why the twins did not seem to grow at all; they remained as little dwarfs. The man became quite angry and swore they could not be his children; the woman cried just as angrily that they

were. And thus arose the great strife between them that gave name to the place.

One evening when the woman was very troubled she decided to go and consult a Gwr Cyfarwydd, feeling certain that he knew all there was to know, since he was so wise. Now there was to be a harvest soon of rye and oats; so the wise man said to her,

'When you are preparing dinner for the reapers, empty the shell of a hen's egg, and boil the shell full of pottage; then take it out through the door as if you meant it for a dinner to the reapers, and then listen to what the twins will say. If you hear the children speaking things above a child's understanding, return into the house, take them up and throw them into the waves of Llyn Ebyr, which is very near to you. But if you do not hear anything amiss, do them no harm.'

So when the day of the reaping came, the woman did as the wise man said; and as she went outside the door to listen, she heard one of the children say to the other,

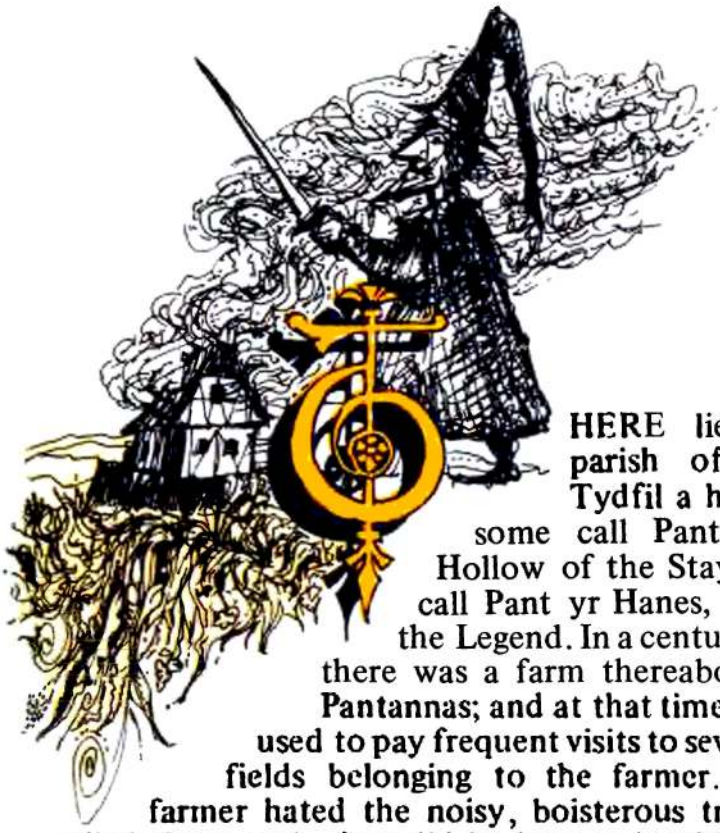
Gwelais vesen cyn gweled derwen,
Gwelais wy cyn gweled iar,
Erioed ni welais verwe bwyd i vedel
Mewn plisgyn wy iar!

Acorns before oak I knew,
An egg before a hen,
Never one hen's egg-shell stew
Enough for harvest men!

On this the mother quickly came back through the door and took the two children; she threw them into the Llyn without another thought. Suddenly the goblins in their trousers appeared to save their dwarfs, pulled them from the lake and ran off with them.

When the woman got back home, she was overjoyed to find her own two children in their cots alive and well. Never again did the goblins try to trick her; and never more was there strife between the woman and her husband.

THE LEGEND OF PANTANNAS



HERE lies in the parish of Merthyr Tydfil a hollow that some call Pant yr Aros, Hollow of the Staying; some call Pant yr Hanes, Hollow of the Legend. In a century gone by there was a farm thereabouts called Pantannas; and at that time the fairies used to pay frequent visits to several of the fields belonging to the farmer. Now the farmer hated the noisy, boisterous tribe, as he called them, and often did he long to be able to find a way to rid the farm of them. At last he was told by an old witch that the way to get rid of them was easy enough, and that she would tell him how to do it, if he gave her one evening's milking on his farm, and one morning's. He agreed, and from her he received advice: he had to plough all the fields where the fairies had their fairy rings, and then, if they found the green sward gone, they would take offence, and never return to trouble him again.

The farmer followed the advice, and his work was successful. Not a single one of them was not to be seen about the fields, and instead of the sound of their sweet music, which used to be heard rising from the Coarse Meadow Land, the most complete silence now reigned over the farm of Pantannas.

But one evening, when the farmer of Pantannas was returning home, he was met by a wee being in the

shape of a man, with a red coat on. When he had come right up to him, the little man drew his sword and, directing the point towards the farmer, he said these words,

Dial a ddaw,	Vengeance cometh,
Y mae gerllaw	Fast it approacheth

The farmer tried to laugh, but there was something in the stern looks of the little fellow which made him feel uncomfortable.

A few nights afterwards, as the family was retiring to rest, they were greatly frightened by a noise, as though the house would fall about them; and then they heard a loud voice saying,

Daw dial	Vengeance cometh.

Next morning, when the corn was reaped and ready to be carried to the barn, it was suddenly burnt up, so that neither an ear nor a straw of it could be found anywhere in the fields; nobody could have set the corn on fire but the fairies.

As one may naturally suppose, the farmer felt very much on account of this event, and he regretted in his heart having done according to the witch's direction, and having brought upon him the anger of the fairies.

The day after the burning of the corn, as he was surveying the fairies' work, behold the little fellow, who had met him a few days before, met him again, and, with a challenging glance, he pointed his sword towards him, saying,

Nid yw ond dechrau	It but beginneth

The farmer's face turned as white as marble, and he stood calling the little fellow to come back; but the dwarf was reluctant to turn to him: but, after long entreaty, he turned back, asking the farmer, in a surly tone, what he wanted. The farmer now said he was quite willing to allow the fields to grow again into a

green sward, and to let them go there as often as they wished, provided they would no further wreak their anger on him.

'No,' was the reply, 'the word of the king has been given, that he will avenge himself on thee to the utmost of his power; and there is no power on the face of creation that will cause it to be withdrawn.'

The farmer began to weep at this and, after a while, the little fellow said that he would speak to his lord on the matter, and that he would let him know the result, if he would come there to meet him at the hour of sunset on the third day after.

The farmer gave his word; and, when the time appointed for the meeting came, he found the little man waiting; and he was told that his lord had seriously considered his request, but that, as the king's word could not be changed, the vengeance was to take effect on the family. On account, however, of his repentance, the curse would not fall in his time or that of his children.

That calmed the farmer a good deal. The fairies began to pay frequent visits to the place, and their melodious singing was again heard at night in the fields around.

* * *

A century passed by without the curse taking effect: and, though the Pantannas family were oft reminded it was certain to come, nevertheless, by long hearing the voice that said,

Daw dial Vengeance cometh

they became so accustomed to it that they were ready to believe nothing would ever come of the threat.

One day, a hundred years on, the heir of Pantannas was receiving the daughter of a neighbouring farmer who lived at the farm-house of Pen Craig Daf; the wedding of the happy pair was to take place in a few

weeks, and the parents on both sides were content. It was Christmastide, and the intended wife was paying a visit to the family of her would-be husband. There they had a feast of roast goose prepared for the occasion.

The company was sitting round the fire, relating amusing tales to pass the time, when they were greatly frightened by a piercing voice, rising, as it were, from the bed of the River Taff, which flowed beyond the house. The voice cried,

Daeth amser ymdial — The time for revenge is come

A silence fell on the house of Pantannas. Then all went out to listen if they could hear the voice a second time; but nothing was heard save the angry noise of the water as it cascaded over the dread cliffs of the *kerwyni*. They had not long to wait, however, till they heard the same voice rising above the noise of the waters, as they boiled over the shoulders of the rock, crying,

Daeth yr amser — The time is come

They could not guess what it meant, and so great was their fright that no one could utter a word. Shortly they returned to the house and at once the whole building shook to its foundations. As they sat seized with fear, behold a little woman made her appearance on the table standing by the window.

'What do you, ugly little thing, want here?' asked someone present.

'I have nothing to do with thee, O man of meddling tongue,' said the little woman, 'I have been sent to recount what is about to happen to this family. I will tell thee this: a maiden's heart is like a ship on the coast, unable to reach the harbour because the pilot has been lost.'

As soon as she finished speaking, she vanished away, no one knew where or how.

During her visit, the cry rising from the river had stopped, but soon afterwards it began again,

Daeth amser dial The time of vengeance is come

Nor did it cease for a long while. The company had been possessed by too much terror for one to be able to talk to another, and a sheet of gloom had been spread over the face of each. At last the time for parting came, and Rhyderch the heir went to escort Gwerfyl, his lady-love, home towards Pen Craig Daf—a journey from which he never returned.

When he did not come home, the parents of the unlucky youth were beside themselves with grief; though they searched every spot in the place, they failed to find him or any clue to what had happened. An aged hermit Gweiryd told them he must have been lured into one of the Fairy caves in the Raven's Rift upon the hillside.

* * *

Time rolled on, weeks grew into months, and months into years, until Rhyderch's father and mother were called to their ancestors. The place continued the same, but the inhabitants constantly changed, so that the memory of Rhyderch's disappearance was fast dying away. Nevertheless, there was one who expected his return all the while, and hoped to see him again. Every morn, she might be seen, in all weathers, hastening to the hilltop, and, with eyes full of tears, gazing in every direction to see if she could behold a sign of her beloved's return; but in vain.

She gazed until she was nearly blind, and she wept forth her soul from day to day for the darling of her heart. At last, her eyes grew dim and though she continued to gaze through sightless eyes, he came not. Full of days, and ripe for the grave, death put an end to all her hopes. Her mortal remains were buried in the graveyard of the old Chapel of the Fan.

Years passed away like smoke, and there was no longer anybody alive who remembered Rhyderch, but the tale of his sudden missing was frequently in people's mouths. And, after his disappearance, no one of the

fairies was seen about the neighbourhood, and the sound of their music ceased from that night.

But Rhyderch did return. In truth, he had been lured by the fairies into their cave. This is what had happened. As he was coming home from Pen Craig Daf, the sounds of sweet music came from a cave in the Raven's Rift, and he stopped to listen. After a while, the music seemed to recede further into the cave, and he stepped inside to hear better. After he had listened for an hour or two, as he thought, the music ceased and he retraced his footsteps rapidly to the mouth of the cave.

When he left the cave it was a fine noon, with the sun beaming from a cloudless sky. He walked on from the Raven's Rift until he came near the site of the Fan Chapel; but what was his astonishment to find no chapel there! Where, he wondered, had he been, and how long away?

He hastened then to Pantannas, opened the door directly and went straight in. The inside of the house seemed strangely different from how he had left it; and he did not know the old man sitting by his fireside, who now asked him,

'Who are you that comes into my house so boldly?'

Rhyderch did not answer straightaway: he was becoming dimly aware that some great change had passed over his life. At last, he said faintly,

'I am Rhyderch.'

'Rhyderch?' said the aged man. 'Rhyderch? I know you not. There is no Rhyderch living in this place, nor have I ever known any man of that name. The only Rhyderch I ever heard of was one who, my grandfather said, had disappeared suddenly from this place, no one knew where, many scores of years ago.'

Rhyderch sank down upon a chair and wept.

The old man's heart went out to him in his grief, and he rose to comfort him. But as he put his hand upon his shoulder, lo! the weeping figure crumbled into dust.

TAFFY AP SION AND THE FAIRY RING

ONCE upon a time, in the days gone by, there were green rings in which Tylwyth Teg, the fairies, used to meet to sing and dance all night. If a body happened to get inside one of these rings when the fairies were there, he could stay there for ages, unawares, listening to their music. Such rings can be found in a hollow near Pencader in Carmarthenshire.

A young man, Taffy ap Sion, son of a shoemaker, used in old times to pasture his sheep in that hollow. One summer's night, when Taffy was preparing to return to the lowlands with his sheep, there suddenly appeared, perched upon a stone near him, a little man in moss breeches with a fiddle under his arm.

He was the tiniest wee specimen of humanity imaginable. His coat was made of birch leaves, and he wore upon his head a helmet which consisted of a gorse flower, while his feet were encased in pumps made of beetle's wings. He ran his fingers over his instrument, and the music made Taffy's hair stand on end.

'Nos da'ch, nos da'ch,' said the little man, which means 'Good-night, good-night to you.'

'Ac i chwithau,' replied Taffy; 'the same to you.'

Then continued the little man,

'You are fond of dancing, Taffy; and if you but tarry awhile you shall behold some of the best dancers in Wales, and I am the musician.'

Said Taffy, 'Then where is your harp? Wela, wela, a Welshman even cannot dance without a harp.'

'Waw, there, look you,' said the little man, 'I can play better dance music upon my fiddle.'

'Is it a fiddle you call that stringed wooden spoon in your hand?' asked Taffy, for he had never seen such an instrument before.

And now Taffy beheld through the dusk hundreds of pretty little sprites coming towards the spot where they stood, from all parts of the mountain. Some were dressed in white, and some in blue, and some in pink, and some carried glow-worms in their hands for torches. And so lightly did they tread that not a blade nor a flower was crushed beneath their weight, and every one made a curtsey or a bow to Taffy as they passed, and Taffy doffed his cap and bowed to them in return.

Presently the little minstrel drew his bow across the strings of his instrument, and the music produced was so enchanting that Taffy stood transfixed to the spot. At the sound of the sweet melody, the Tylwyth Teg ranged themselves in groups, and began to sing and dance. And this was the song they sang:

'Canu, canu drwy y nos
Dawnsio, dawnsio, ar Waen y Rhos
Y'ngoleuni'r lleuad dlos:
Hapus ydym ni!

Pawb ohonom syd yn tton
Heb un gofid dan ei fron:
Canu, dawnsio, ar y ton –
Dedwyd ydym ni! '

Singing, singing, through the night,
Dancing, dancing with all our might,
Where the moon the moor does light,
Happy ever we!

One and all of merry mien,
Without sorrow are we seen,

Singing, dancing on the green,
Happy ever we!

Now of all the dancing Taffy had ever seen, none was to be compared to that he saw at this moment going on. He could not help keeping time with his hands and feet to the merry music, but he dared not join in the dance, for he thought within himself that to dance on a mountain at night in strange company, to perhaps the devil's fiddle, might not be the most direct route to heaven.

But at last he found there was no resisting this bewitching music, joined to the sight of the capering Ellyllon.

'Now for it, then,' screamed Taffy, as he pitched his cap into the air with a shout of glee.

'Play away, old devil! '

No sooner were the words uttered than everything underwent a change. The gorse-blossom cap vanished from the minstrel's head, and a pair of goat's horns branched out instead. His face turned as black as soot; a long tail grew out his leafy coat, while cloven feet replaced the beetle-wing pumps. Taffy's heart was heavy, but his heels were light. Horror was in his bosom, but madness was in his feet.

The fairies changed into a variety of forms. Some became goats, and some became dogs, some assumed the shape of foxes, and others that of cats. It was the strangest crew that ever surrounded a human being. The dance became at last so furious that Taffy could not make out the forms of the dancers. They reeled around him with such rapidity that they almost resembled a wheel of fire.

Still Taffy danced on. He could not stop, the devil's fiddle was too much for him, as the figure with the goat's horns kept pouring it out faster and faster, and Taffy kept reeling around in spite of himself.

Suddenly, after he had danced several minutes, as he supposed, he chanced to step outside the fairy circle. And all was gone.

He was then astonished to find that the scene which had been so familiar was now quite strange to him.

Here were roads and houses he had never seen, and in place of his father's humble cottage there now stood a fine stone farmhouse. About him were farmed fields instead of the barren mountain he was used.

'Ah,' thought he, 'this is some fairy trick to deceive my eyes. It is not ten minutes since I stepped into that circle, and now when I step out they have built my father a new house! Well, I only hope it is real; anyhow, I'll go and see.'

So he started off by a path he knew, and suddenly struck against a very solid hedge. He rubbed his eyes, felt the hedge with his fingers, scratched his head, felt the hedge again, ran a thorn into his fingers and cried out,

'Wbwb! This is no fairy hedge anyhow, nor, from the age of the thorns, was it grown in a few minutes' time.'

So he climbed over it and walked on.

'Here was I born,' said he, as he entered the farmyard, staring wildly about him, 'and not a thing here do I know! '

His confusion was complete when there came bounding towards him a huge dog, barking furiously.

'What do is this? Get out, you ugly brute! Don't you know I'm master here?'

But the dog only barked the harder.

'Surely,' muttered Taffy to himself, 'I have lost my road and am wandering through some unknown neighbourhood; but no, yonder is the Careg Hir! '

And he stood staring at the well-known stone thus called, which still stands on the mountain south of Pencader.

As Taffy stood thus looking at the Long Stone, he heard footsteps behind him, and turning, beheld the occupant of the farmhouse, who had come out to see why his dog was barking. Poor Taffy was so ragged that the farmer's Welsh heart was at once stirred to sympathy.

'Who are you, poor man?' he asked.

To which Taffy answered, 'I know who I was, but I do not know who I am now. I was the son of a shoemaker who lived in this place this morning; for that rock, though it is changed a little, I know too well.'

'Poor fellow,' said the farmer, 'you have lost your senses. This house was built by my great-grandfather, repaired by my grandfather; and that part there, which seems newly built, was done about three years ago at my expense. You must be mistaken, or have missed the road; but come in and refresh yourself with some food, and rest.'

Taffy was half persuaded that he had overslept himself and lost his road, but looking back he saw the rock and exclaimed,

'It is but an hour since I was on yonder rock robbing a hawk's nest.'

Taffy then related his adventure.

'Ah,' said the farmer, 'I see how it is—you have been with the fairies. Pray, who was your father?'

'Sion Evan y Crydd o Glanrhyd,' was the answer.

'I never heard of such a man,' said the farmer, shaking his head, 'nor of such a place as Glanrhyd, either: but no matter, after you have taken a little food we will step down to Catti Shon, at Pencader, who will probably be able to tell us something.'

With this he beckoned Taffy to follow him, and walked on; but hearing behind him the sound of footsteps growing weaker and weaker, he turned round, when to his horror he beheld the poor fellow crumble to a thimbleful of black ashes. The farmer, though much terrified at this sight, kept calm enough to go at once and see old Catti, the aged crone he had referred to, who lived at Pencader near by. He found her crouching over a fire of faggots, trying to warm her old bones.

'And how do you do the day, Catti Shon?' asked the farmer.

'Ah,' said old Catti, 'I'm wonderful well, farmer, considering how old I am.'

'Yes, yes, you're very old. Now, since you are so old, let me ask you—do you remember anything about Sion y Crydd o Glanrhyd? Was there ever such a man, do you know?'

'Sion Glanrhyd? O, I have some faint recollection of hearing my grandfather, old Evan Shenkin, Penferdir, relate that Sion's son was lost one morning, and they never heard of him afterwards, so that it was said he

was taken by the fairies. His father's cot stood somewhere near your house.'

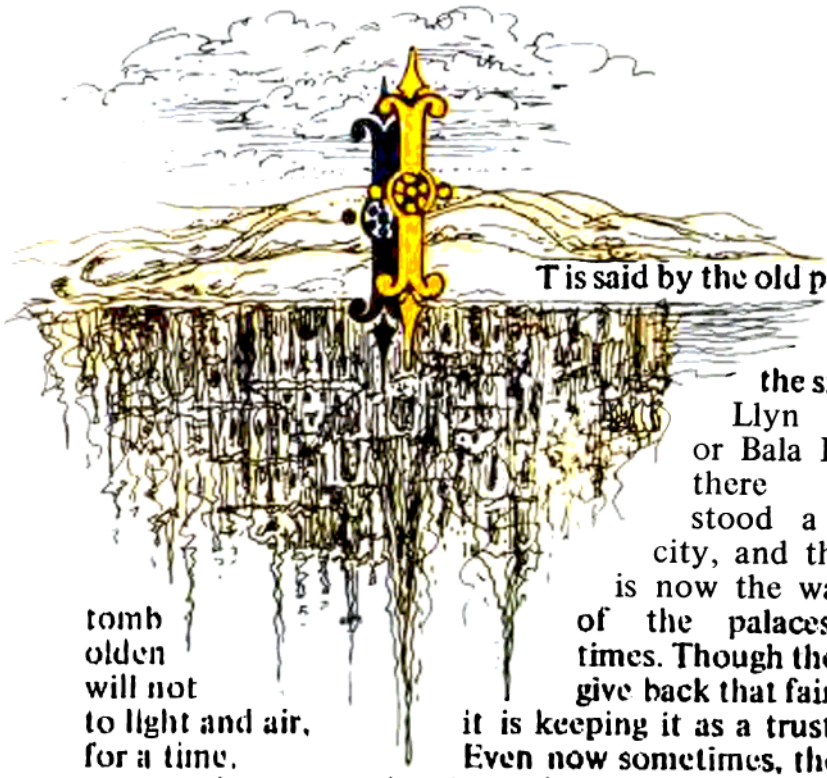
'Were there many fairies about at that time?' asked the farmer.

'Oh yes, they were often seen on yonder hill, and I was told they were lately seen in Pant Shon Shenkin, eating flummery out of egg-shells, which they had stolen from a farm hard by.'

'Dir anwyl fi!' cried the farmer; 'dear me, I recollect now: I saw them myself! But they are not as plentiful as in the time of Sion's son.'

And he told the sad story of all that had passed.

THE SUNKEN CITY OF LLYN BALA



It is said by the old people that on the site of Llyn Bala, or Bala Lake, there once stood a fine city, and that it is now the watery tomb of the palaces of olden times. Though the lake will not give back that fair city to light and air, it is keeping it as a trust but for a time. Even now sometimes, though very rarely, eyes gazing down through the green waters

can see not only the fluted glistering sand dotted here and there with shells and tufts of waving sea-weed, but the wide streets, costly buildings and palaces of that now silent city. Yet not always silent, for now and then will come chimes and peals of bells, sometimes near, sometimes distant, sounding low and sweet like a call to prayer, or as rejoicing for a victory. Nay, the chimes of the bells may be heard only by those who have ears for such music. They are more often heard in the long twilight, or by night.

Some old boatmen have told of how, on quiet moonlit nights, they have heard a fairy counting, like bells tolling,

un, dau, tri, pedwar, pump
un, dau, tri, pedwar, pump

as hard as her tongue can go.

Those sounds are but a recollection over oblivion, for in one of those palaces lived in olden times a prince of Wales named Tegid with his wife Ceridwen. And he was a most cruel and wicked man. Of him it was said: 'Whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive.' Such was his power and tyranny.

One day, the prince, while enjoying the morning breezes of summer in his garden, heard a voice saying,

Dial a daw, dial a daw Vengeance will come

Almost at once a second voice was heard, saying,

Pa bryd y daw? When will it come?

Then he heard the first voice reply,

Yn y dryded genheadlaeth In the third generation

At that he laughed the threat away with contempt. And thought no more about it.

Years later, when his wife had borne three sons, and they showed signs of being crueller than him, he was once more walking in the garden when he heard the

same voices crying the same words,

Dial a daw, dial a daw.
Pa bryd y daw?
Yn y dryded genhedlaeth.

Once more he laughed the threat away.

Years passed, till the day when the stone walls of his palace rang with rejoicing over the birth of a son to the eldest boy and his wife of the king and queen. That day they sent for a poor harper from the neighbouring hills, that he might provide music for feasting and dancing that night.

When he had reached the palace, the harper was astonished at the number of the guests, including among them noble lords, princes, and princesses: never before had he seen such splendour. When he had begun playing, the gentlemen and ladies dancing presented a superb appearance; the mirth and wine abounded, the silver candlesticks and the golden goblets danced and rang out to their rejoicing. Nor had he much heart for playing for the cruel prince and his spoilt retinue.

Towards midnight, when there was an interval between the dancing and the harper had been left alone, he suddenly heard a voice singing in a sort of whisper in his ear,

Dial a daw, dial a daw

He turned at once and saw a little bird, hovering above him and beckoning him on, to follow him. He followed the bird as best he could, but once outside the palace he thought better of it. Yet the bird continued to invite him on, and to sing in a plaintive voice the words,

Dial a daw, dial a daw

The old harper was afraid of what might happen if he did not follow, so he went on and on, over bogs and through thickets, while the bird was all the while hovering before him and leading him along the safest

paths. Yet if he stopped for a moment the same mournful notes of

Dial a daw, dial a daw

would sing out in an even more sorrowful voice.

At last they reached the top of the hill, some distance from the palace. As the old harper was very weary, he ventured once more to stop and rest, but he heard the bird's warning voice no more. As he listened, he heard nothing save the murmuring of the burn hard by. He now began to think how foolish he had been to allow himself to be led away from the palace ball, leaving his harp behind.

The moon now slid behind a black cloud and he could barely see his hand before his face. It was not long before darkness and his weariness overcame him and he fell into a deep slumber till the break of day.

In the morning he awoke and looked about him; and he could scarce believe his gaze. For as he turned his eyes towards the palace, there was no palace there: just a large calm lake. And as he looked hard he noticed an object floating on the surface; coming to the lakeside, he saw it was his harp, gliding towards him across the placid waters of the lake.

The Midlands

THE CLICKING TOAD

ONCE upon a time—and a very good time it was—when pigs were swine and dogs ate lime, and monkeys chewed tobacco, when houses were thatched with pancakes, streets paved with plum puddings, and roasted pigs ran up and down the streets with knives and forks on their backs, crying, 'Come and eat me! ', that was a good time for travellers.

And this particular traveller, who had come to Darlaston on business, betook himself for a walk in the fields beyond the town while he was waiting for his return coach. It was an evening in late summer, still but close. The harvest had begun and the oats were already stooked; and the partridges were feeding in the blond stubble. The thrushes and blackbirds had finished singing, and only the woodpigeons, hidden in the tops of the elms, tried over their unfinished coo-ings.

The pastures tempted the traveller, for most of his days were spent in towns. He climbed stiles, wandered

here and there, meeting nobody but an old gaffer whom he greeted with,

'We've had a lot of rain, I see.'

'I know'd we should,' said the old fellow. 'Saturday moon and Sunday full, allus brings rain and allus 'ull.'

The traveller passed on, smelling the late honeysuckle and prying for berries. And he heated himself so much that he grew impatient with his heavy clothes. He took off his waistcoat and threw it over his arm and, as he walked from hedge to hedge and reached now to this bough and now to that, he did not notice his watch slip from his waistcoat pocket and fall without a sound between two tussocks. Not even when he was in the coach, an hour later, and on his way home, did he realise he had lost his watch. While the coach wheels spun merrily over the road, it lay where it had fallen, ticking away to the grasshoppers and the ants and the ladybirds that lived in the grasses around it.

It was a fine watch, with a full white face, slender pointers, and a loud clear tick; and as the evening came on and the day grew cool, and the last birds silenced themselves, its ticking seemed to grow louder and louder, as if the watch were alive and were asking to be found and taken from its prison between the tussocks. When the first stars began to show themselves, its white face seemed to grow luminous; from a distance it shone like a mushroom or a rare flower that opened only at night.

No one, however, came that way till night. Then, when the Darlaston bells were ringing curfew and there was no light in the sky except a faint green glimmer in the west, two men came by to look at some snares that they had set. They came guiltily and furtively, for they were poaching; after all, their day was the noon of night. Their ears were open for any strange sound and no sooner had they come within earshot of the watch than they stopped and listened.

'Hark, Bill,' said the first poacher, 'there's something strange here. Hold still and listen.'

''Tis a grasshopper,' replied Bill.

'A grasshopper? I never yet heard the grasshopper

that chirped as long as this. Listen to him. He never stops.'

"'Tis something else then. 'Tis a bird, maybe.'

'If 'tis, 'tis a bewitched bird then,' said Tom, and at that moment a breath of wind carried the ticking towards them and made the sound louder than ever.

'Let's track him down,' replied Bill, and cautiously they quartered the ground till they came to the watch.

'There he is. I can see him shining. He has one big eye. Can you see him?'

'That I can, and I don't like the look on him.'

'No more do I. Look, he's ready to spring. A pound to a penny, 'tis something wicked. Come on, let's be off, or he'll be at our throats and sucking our blood afore we know where we are.'

His friend needed no encouragement. Both took to their heels and did not stop running till they were well clear of the one-eyed monster that lurked among the tussocks and ticked so mysteriously.

Once home they told the story of the strange noise that had alarmed them and by the next morning all Darlaston had heard of the strange creature that lay in the fields, and all Darlaston was curious to peep at it. However, though many peeped, it was a sad truth that not one man, not one woman could tell what it was, for there was no one in Darlaston that had ever before in his life seen a watch. In the end it was agreed that the solution to the problem should be left to a wise old man who had lived all his life in those parts. To Daddy—for so they called him—they sent a deputation; and word soon went round that Daddy was going forth to make a pronouncement on the riddle.

Daddy was a very old man. His face was shrunk like a long-kept apple and covered with small wrinkles that ran together like cracks in a crock. His eyes were light blue and watery, and he kept his mouth open as if it was too much of an effort for him to hold up his jaw. He was too infirm to walk so they put him in an old wheelbarrow and wheeled him off to the field.

When he came near, the circle round the watch opened, let him in, and then closed again. As the wheelbarrow was halted a silence came over the crowd.

'Take I right up to this object,' said Daddy.

'Why, you be right up to it now,' called the bystanders.

'Then wheel I round the object,' said the old man, and his wheeler took him up and with great gravity wheeled him round.

'Wheel I round again,' said the old man, and it seemed as if he were enjoying being trundled around so. They made a second circuit. 'Now wheel I round a third time.'

The third circuit was completed, the barrow legs were set down and a great silence fell on the crowd. Then, struggling to his feet, the old man lifted up his arms and cried out in a foreboding voice,

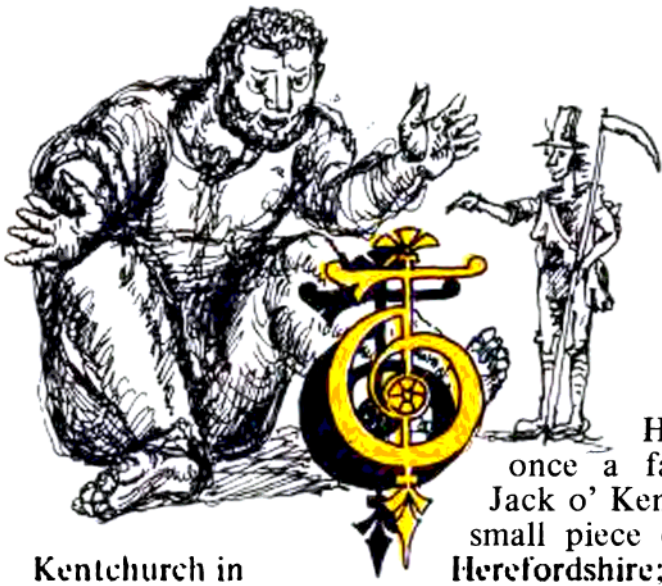
''Tis un clicking toad! 'Tis un clicking toad! Lads, arm yourselves with sticks and stones, for the end of the world be coming upon Darlaston! '

When they heard this direful utterance, sticks and stones were the last things that the folks of Darlaston thought of. Instead, with yells and shrieks they turned and ran home as fast as they could. To Daddy, trundled along more quickly than ever he had been wheeled before, it seemed as if his prophecy was coming true more quickly than he himself had realised. Man, woman and child, all fled to their homes and barred, bolted and shuttered every door and window. All that day, and all the next day the streets and fields were empty. All Darlaston was indoors waiting for Judgement Day to come.

Of course, Judgement Day did not come. While the people of Darlaston read away at their bibles, and gabbled at their prayers, all that happened outside was that a traveller got down from the mail coach just outside the town, crossed the field, picked up the watch he had lost, thanked his good fortune, and went away.

Be bow bend it,
My tale's ended.
If you don't like it,
You may mend it.

TOPS OR BUTTS?



THERE was once a farmer called Jack o' Kent who had a small piece of land near Kentchurch in Herefordshire; he grew enough to support himself and his family, though he did but poorly at the best of times.

One morning when he was ploughing his field he had just reached the end of the furrow and was turning the horse round when he looked up and saw a Boggard, standing with his arms folded and feet planted far apart and scowling down at him.

'This is my land,' he growled. 'What are you doing on it?'

The farmer was secretly very frightened, but he answered quietly,

'You haven't been here for so long, I was ploughing it up for you, ready for this year's crops.'

'It's mine,' answered the Boggard, scratching his shaggy chest, 'but you can work it for me.'

'That will suit me,' said the farmer, gaining confidence. 'Suppose we share it. I do the work and you give me half the crop for my wages.'

The Boggard laid a dark, horny hand on the plough and said,

'How are you going to share the crop?'

Jack the farmer thought a moment.

'This year,' he replied, 'you take everything above ground and I take the roots—you have the Tops and I the Butts.'

This seemed to satisfy the Boggard who agreed to come in the autumn to collect his share of the crop. The farmer watched him lumber away over the ploughed field, look for the stile which he couldn't find, and blunder through a gap in the hedge.

The crop that year was turnips. When the Boggard came to claim his half of the crop he got the leaves and the weeds while Jack the farmer carted off all the fine round roots and stored them in his barn.

The Boggard was angry and puzzled, but could not deny that the agreement had been kept. He rootled about among the heap of turnip leaves and cadlock hoping to find something of value, but in vain. At last he said,

'Next year we'll have it the other way round. You'll have Tops and I'll keep Butts.'

The farmer readily agreed. This time he ploughed and harrowed the ground most carefully and sowed a fine crop of wheat.

The Boggard arrived just as the harvest waggon was taking the last golden load across the field. All the harvesters—men, women, boys and girls—were singing as the big shire mare lifted her fairy feet, solemnly and carefully dragging the precious sheaves towards the farmyard.

Only gradually did the Boggard realise he had been tricked. The stubble and the corn-roots were even less use than the turnip leaves. It was not worth his while to plough them on.

But everyone was very kind to him at the Harvest Home and he drank a great deal, scoffed some hot bag-puddings, and even tried to dance a sort of jig, but fell down before he had reached the capers. Then he sat quietly in a corner watching the merry-makers until at last the party was over and all the harvesters had gone home.

'See here, Jack,' he said to the farmer, 'I think yous't got some pins about you, lad. Next time we'll share the crop above ground.'

He laid his great paw on the farmer's shoulder and looked down earnestly into his face.

'We'll start reaping together and each shall have whatever he reaps.'

Jack o' Kent accepted this arrangement and the Boggard stumbled off.

The next year wheat was grown and a fine upstanding field it was, rippling like a golden sea in the breeze.

But the farmer had been to the blacksmith and got him to make some iron rods about three feet long and as thick as a clay pipe shank. These rods he stuck into the ground at irregular intervals in the Boggard's half of the wheat field.

The time for the reaping match arrived. Each reaper sharpened his scythe well beforehand and when the church clock struck five they both began to reap. The farmer got on well; his scythe went swishing through the straw, and the corn fell down with a rustle at every stroke.

But the Boggard did not get on so fast. He had not reaped a dozen yards before the blade of his scythe was hacked in several places.

'Hey, I must stop and wiffle-waffle,' he cried, by which he meant he must whet his scythe with his hone.

The farmer laughed and went on reaping—he had already covered twice as much ground as his rival.

'This corn must be full of real tough burdocks with old stalks like sticks of iron,' complained the Boggard, looking ruefully at the jagged edge of his scythe.

The farmer was away down the field almost out of earshot by now. The sun was getting higher and the dew on the corn had dried. But the Boggard could make no progress at all, for his battered scythe would not reap even when he had a clear patch of corn. He flung it down on the stubble.

'You can take your mucky old land, and keep it! ' he said in despair. 'I won't have any more to do with it. I'm as sick as a toad of it, and of you an' all.'

And off he went and never came back and the farmer never saw him again. But he kept the Boggard's jagged scythe and hung it in his barn.

And now his grandson shows it proudly to his friends to testify to the truth of the story, and he warns young farmers not to be frightened by bullies, for a wise man will get the better of them.

* * *

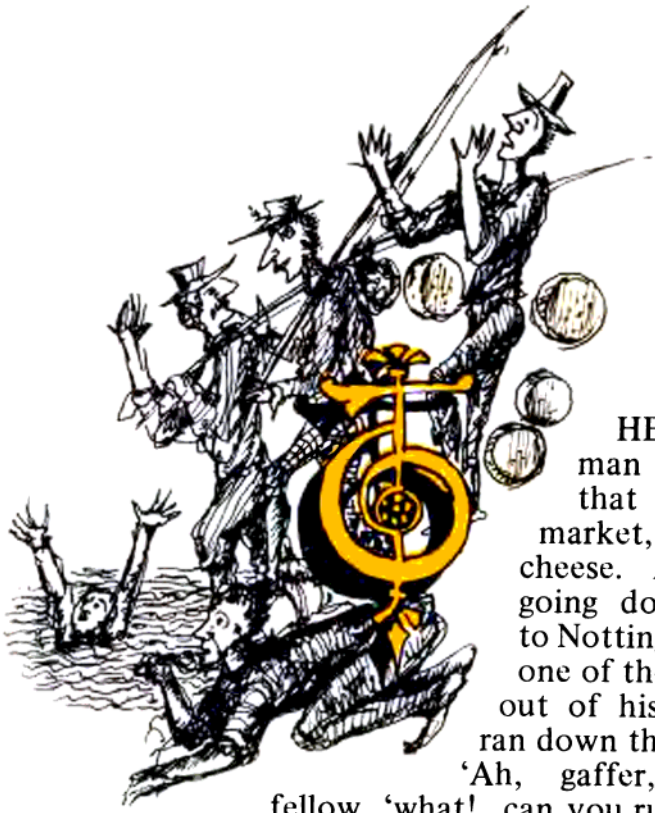
RIDDLES

Round the rick and round the rick,
There I met my Uncle Dick.
I cut off his head and drank his blood,
And left his body standing.
(a bottle of cider)

As round as a hoop,
As black as a coal,
A long tail and
A little round hole.
(a frying pan)

THE WISE MEN OF GOTHAM

Tell me no more of Gotham Fools,
Or of their eels in little pools,
Which they were told were drowning;
Nor of their carts drawn up on high
When King John's men were standing by,
To keep a wood from browning.



HERE was a man of Gotham that went to the market, there to sell cheese. As he was going down the hill to Nottingham Bridge, one of the cheeses fell out of his pouch and ran down the hill.

'Ah, gaffer,' said the fellow, 'what! can you run to market alone? I'll send the others after you.'

Then laying down his pouch and taking out the cheeses, he tumbled them down the hill, one after the other. Some ran into one bush, and some into another. But he called out after them,

'I charge you to meet me in the market place.'

He came to the market to meet the cheeses, and stayed until it was almost over, then went to enquire of his neighbours if they saw the cheeses come to market.

'Why, who should bring them?' said one.

'Marry, themselves,' said the fellow. 'They know the way very well. I did fear that they ran so fast they probably are now in York.'

Whereupon he rode off forthwith, but to this day no man has ever heard more of his cheeses.

* * *

On a certain time there were twelve men of Gotham who went fishing, and some went into the water and some stood on dry land. On going home, one said to the other,

'We have ventured wonderfully in wading; I pray God that none of us come home drowned! '

Said another,

'Nay marry, let us see that, for there were twelve of us come out.'

Then they counted themselves and each and everyone told eleven. Said each to the other,

'There is one of us drowned.'

So they went back to the brook where they had been fishing, seeking up and down for him that was drowned, making great crying. A farmer came riding by and asked what it was they sought for, and why they were so sorrowful.

Said they,

'This day we went to fish in the brook, twelve of us did come out together, and one is drowned.'

Said the farmer,

'Tell me how many there be of you.'

One of them said there were eleven, and did not count himself.

Said the farmer,

'What will you give if I will find the truth?'

Said they,

'All the money we have.'

'Give me the money then,' said the farmer.

And, beginning with the first, he gave them each a whack over the shoulders with his whip, crying,

'Here is one, and here is two.'

And so on up to twelve.

When he came to the last he gave him a hearty blow for luck, saying,

'Here is the twelfth man.'

'God's blessing on your heart,' said they, 'for finding our dead brother.'

* * *

On a day some men of Gotham were walking by the riverside, six miles south of Nottingham, and came to a place where the contrary currents caused the water to boil, as in a whirlpool. Said one,

'See how the water boils.'

Said another,

'If we had plenty of oatmeal, we might make enough porridge to serve all the village for a month.'

So they resolved that part of them should go back to the village and fetch all their oatmeal, which was soon brought and tipped into the river. But there presently arose the question of how they were to know when the porridge should be ready. This difficulty was overcome by the offer of one of the company to jump in.

It was further agreed that if he found it ready he should raise his arms to signify so. The man jumped in and found the water deeper than he had thought; thrice he rose to the surface, but said nothing. The others were impatient of his long silence, and seeing him smack his lips and throw up his arms, took this for avowal that the porridge was good.

So they all jumped in after him to share the feast, and were sadly drowned.

I went into t'garden to get a bit o' thyme;
I've telled my tale, thee tell thine.

THE GREEN LADIES OF ONE TREE HILL

FEW will need to be told that the Christmas season consists of twelve days besides Christmas Day, which are commonly spoken of in Shropshire as Christmastide. Preparation for Christmas includes a general house-cleaning: everything is scrubbed to the utmost pitch of cleanliness. The pewter and brazen vessels have to be made so bright that the maids can see to put their caps on in them—otherwise the fairies will pinch them. But if all is perfect, the worker will find a coin in her shoe.

Then the clean cheerful family kitchen must be adorned with holly and ivy. Sprigs of bright-berried holly, alternating with darker ivy, are stuck in the small leaded panes of the window casements, among the willow-pattern plates and dishes on the dark oak dresser, and the tall brass candlesticks, chaney ornaments and crock dogs on the high mantleshelf.

Christmas fare would consist of new beer, and honey, primrose, elderberry and dandelion wines, with

roast and boiled beef, hams, hares, geese and fowls, mince and apple pies, junkets, cinnamon cakes, cider cakes and Christmas cakes. Supper fare consists of meat, pig's puddings, pork pies or mince pies, or else of toasted cheese eaten with beer and toast.

In the evening, fireside games, riddles, cards, and dancing took the place of the ordinary occupations of spinning and winding:

'Well, whad did'n 'ee do, if theer wuz no daincin'! W'y, we played'n at turn-the-trancher an' blind-man's-buff till we wun tired, an' then begun to tell ridlesses, an' whad twix puzzlin' to fine 'em out, an' then cryin' the weds, we gotten to three o'clock i' the mornin'.'

So blind-man's-buff was the favourite game of the juniors, rivalled only by 'sousing for apples', that is taking apples out of a tub of water with the teeth, the hands being tied behind the back, and comrades on the alert to souse the bold wight's head under water just at the critical moment.

And then there were the stories. Here is one from Baslow in Derbyshire.

There were once three tall trees on a hill and on moonlight nights singing could be heard and three Green Ladies danced there. No one dared go near except the farmer and he only climbed the hill once a year on Midsummer Eve to lay a posy of late primroses on the root of each tree. The leaves rustled and the sun shone out, and he made quite sure he was safe indoors before sunset. It was a rich farm and he often said to his three sons,

'My father always said our luck lies up there; when I'm dead don't forget to do as I did, and my father before me, and all our forbears through the years.'

And they listened, but did not take much heed, except the youngest.

When the old man died the big farm was divided into three. The eldest brother took a huge slice, and the next brother he took another, and that left the youngest with a strip of poor rough ground at the foot of the hill, but he didn't say much but set to work

about it and sang as he worked and was indoors before sunset.

One day his brothers came to see him. Their big farms were not doing very well and when they saw his rich little barley fields and the few loaded fruit trees, and his roots and herbs growing so green and smelling so sweet, and his three cows giving rich milk, they were angry and jealous.

'Who helps you in your work?' they asked. 'They say down in the village there's singing and dancing at night. A hard-working farmer should be abed.'

But the youngest never answered.

'Did we see you up the hill by the trees as we came? What were you about?'

'I was doing as Father told us years ago. 'Tis Midsummer Eve,' he said quietly enough then.

But they were too angry even to laugh at him.

'The hill is mine,' cried the eldest. 'Don't let me see you up there again. As for the trees, I need timber for my new great barn, so I'm cutting one down. And you two can help me.'

But the second brother found he had to go to market, and the youngest never answered. The next day, Midsummer Day, the eldest came with carts and men and axes, and called to his youngest brother, who was busy in the herb garden; but he only said,

'Remember what day it is.'

But the eldest and his team went on up the hill to the three trees. When he laid his axe to the first tree it screamed like a woman, the horses ran away and the men after them, but the eldest went on hacking. The wind howled and the two other trees lashed their branches in anger. Then the murdered tree fell down, down on top of him and killed him. By and by his servants came and took the dead man and the dead tree away and then there were only two Green Ladies on moonlit nights.

The second brother came back from market and took both the farms for himself, and the youngest he still worked his little strip of land and took primroses up the hill on Midsummer Eve. But the big farms

didn't prosper at all and one Midsummer Eve the second brother saw the youngest brother up by the two trees. He was afraid to go up there, so he yelled,

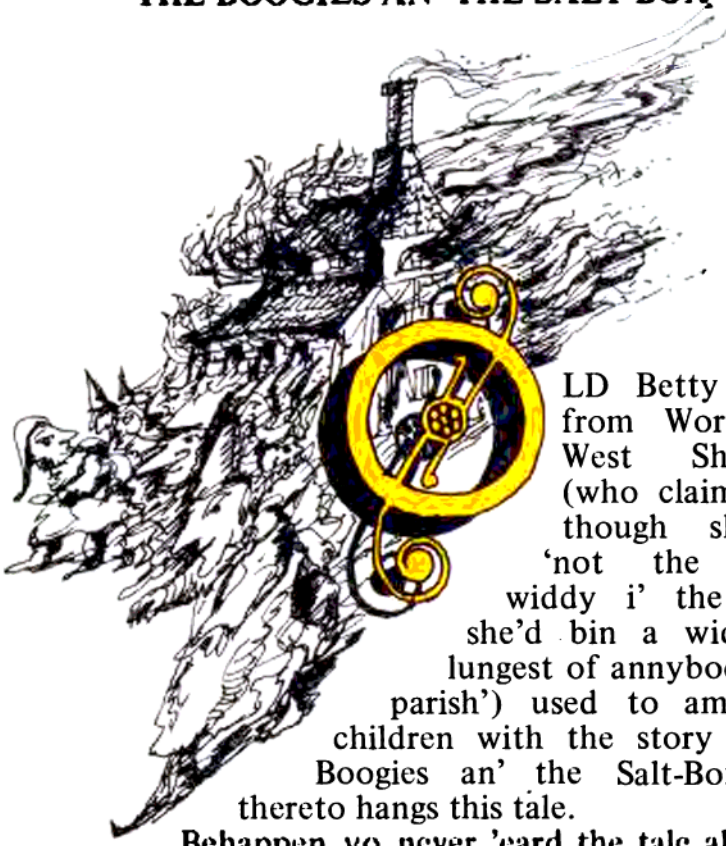
'Come off my land and take your cows away, breaking my hedges down. I'll build a sout timber fence round my hill and I'll cut down one of the trees to make it with.'

That night there was no dancing together, there was no music but the crying of many leaves, and the youngest brother was very sad. The next morning, the second brother came with an axe and the two trees shuddered; but he only made sure there was no wind to drop the tree his way. The tree screamed like a woman as it fell and the youngest brother watching from the lane below with his cows saw the last tree lift a great branch and bring it down on his brother's head and kill him.

People came and took the second dead tree and man away, and the youngest brother now had all three farms. But he still lived in his little farm near the hill and the lonely Green Lady. And sometimes she would dance alone to a sad little tune on moonlit nights, and he always left a bunch of late primroses at the roots of the one tree every Midsummer Eve and his farms prospered from that day.

There are many people nowadays who won't climb One Tree Hill, especially on Midsummer Eve, and one or two very old people remember being told when they were little children that it must never be fenced because it belonged to a Green Lady.

THE BOOGIES AN' THE SALT-BOX



OLD Betty Cooper from Worthen in West Shropshire (who claimed that though she was 'not the owdest widdy i' the parish, she'd bin a widdy the lungest of annybody i' the parish') used to amuse the children with the story of 'The Boogies an' the Salt-Box', and thereto hangs this tale.

Behappen yo never 'eard the tale about the Salt-Box. Well, yo sin, theer wuz wunst some folks o' the name o' Runnells as lived at the Gorsty Bonk, an' they'd 'n a rar' good farm, an' the 'ouse wuz a good un on'y it wus a nancient owd place, as 'ad bin a fine mansion or summat o' that i' some king's reign.

But the wurst on it wus as it wuz 'aunted ooth sperrits, or boogies, or whadever you callen 'em, an' they wun like a lickle own mon an' ooman, an' the Runnellses wun plegged to djeth ooth 'em, for they wun al'ays prancin' about the 'ouse an' the fowd an' the filds an' everyw'eer, an' nuthin couldna stond nor rest for 'em, an' they wun on for iverlastin'; they wun that onlucky an gallus. An' they couldna get shet on 'em no road.

They fetched the parson to 'em wunst; but they didna mind 'im, an' maden all manner o' game on 'im,

an' I think as a wuz fritten'd at 'em.

So at last they wun gotten so bad as the Runnellses couldna put up ooth 'em no lunger; so they maded up thar minds to goo an live at a smaller farm a good way off, an' try an' o'erget the boogies.

So they gotten thar things away a feow at a time, as they coulden, onknowens to the owd mon an' ooman; till at last one night they gotten right clier off, an' lef the boogies i' the empy 'ouse. So atter they wun come to the new place, they fel'en fine an' glad as they wun got out on 'em so well, an' begunnen to onload an fettle up a bit.

An everythin' wuz comen all right, but an owd Salt-Box as they wun oncommon fond on they hadna lef' 'im behind! An' they wun despert vexed an' toud the cowman to goo an' fatch 'im; but a wuz to be mighty carful as the boogies didna see 'in or goodnis knows whad.

So a set out, an' a didna like the job at all, but they senten young Yeddart ooth 'im, an' if yo'n believe me, they 'adna gwun no great way when begum who should they see, comin' alung right jimmy, but the owd mon an' ooman; an' they sidden the cowman an' Yeddart in a minute, so it wunna no use on 'em tryin' to turn agen, an' they sen,

'We'n brought yore salt-box, we'n brought yore saut-box.'

So they all wenten to the 'ouse, an' the Runnellses wun in a most despert way when they sidden the boogies comin'; but they maden out as they wun right glad to see 'em agen, an axt 'em to come in an' a some mate an' drink. So they wenten i' the best parlour, an' while they wun theer, the Runnellses got'n a lot o' chumps from the wood-pile an' maden a rousin' big fire i' the brewhouse; an' then they gotten a boutin o' straw an' put i' front o' the fire, an' made the cowman lie down theer an' covered 'im all o'er ooth the straw, an' then they axed the boogies to come an' warm 'em—for it wuz a coud time o' year—an' put 'em to set on the truss o' straw.

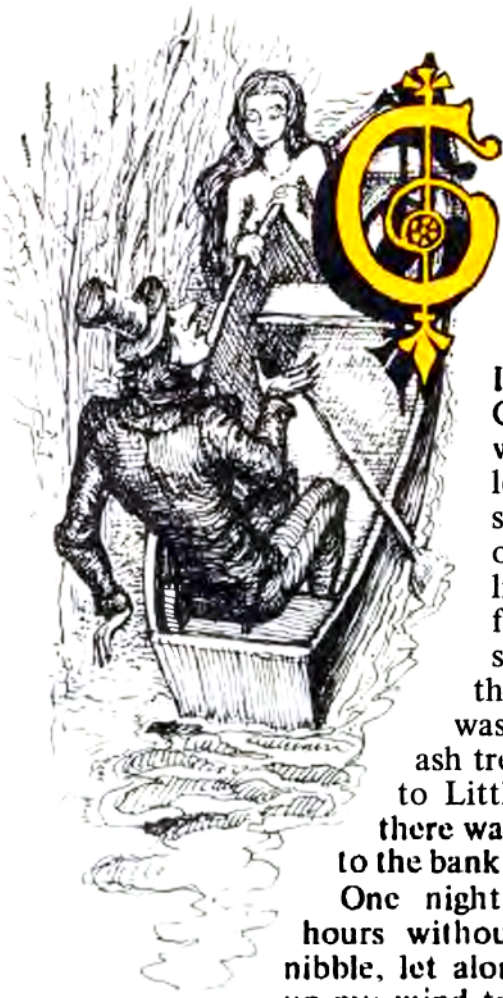
So they gid 'em some bif an' a can o' drink, an' comen an' talked to 'em, an' toud 'em the news, an' all

on a sudden up jumps th' cowman an' chucks 'em right smack into the fire, straw an' all, an' they setten about an' poked 'em ooth pitchforks an' besoms, an' kep 'em i' the blaze till they wun all snirped up an burnt to ess.

An' they never sid no more on 'em atter than, but wenten back to the Gorsty Bonk, an' ad'n some pace an' quietnis.

East Anglia

GHOSTS IN THE FEN



GHOSTS, bor? Why, the old Fen's full of them. The best time to see them is during what we call chiming hours: four, eight and twelve o'clock. Have I seen any of them? Of course I have, and so will you if you live as long as I've done and spend five nights out of six poaching or fishing like I do. I used to go fishing in the finest swim for bream that there was in the river; it was down by that blasted ash tree just before you come to Littleport Chair. Years ago there was a house quite close up to the bank there, but it's gone now. One night I'd been fishing for hours without even getting a little nibble, let alone a bite. I'd just made up my mind to pack up and go home

when the old boat started rocking and I wondered what was up. Then a pair of hands grabbed hold of the side, nearly upsetting me, and as I sat there, dumbstruck, I saw a lovely young woman clambering into the boat. She had long hair which came right down to her knees and that was all she had on to keep out the cold. I wasn't what you'd call scared, just a bit uncomfortable because I knew there was a chap fishing a bit higher up river and I didn't like the idea of him coming along and seeing a pretty young woman in the boat with me. So I asked her,

'What do you want, my gal?'

She shook her head, which made the water fly out of her hair; some of it got into my eyes but, though it made them smart, I could still see what a white skin she had. I asked her again,

'What do you want?'

But before the words were out of my mouth she was overboard and in the river and back again with a baby in her arms. I told her she was a better hand at fishing than I was as I'd been sitting there all night and not pulled out a thing, let alone a baby.

Well, she sat there for some time, nursing the little one, then I told her that, as my luck was out, I was pulling for home and bed—that is, unless she liked to nip over the side and bring back a few bream instead of a baby. Then the boat rocked so much that it flung me off the seat backwards and I got such a ding on the back of my head, as I hit the planks at the bottom, that I went right off to sleep and lay there till the other chap came along and woke me by saying,

'Blast you, bor, I've been out all night and not had a bite, and here you are with so many fish that you got tired of pulling them out and went to sleep.'

And do you know, when I looked down I saw more fish lying on the bilge boards than I could have caught in a week, and when I pulled out my keep-net that was full too.

'Yes,' I said, 'I've had pretty good luck tonight; that's because I've had someone to help me, but she must have gone home a good while ago.'

'And time, too,' he said, 'for I reckon you and your

old woman must have caught every fish in the river.'

Next day I went to see old Bob Newton who was the oldest man in the Fen—near a hundred he must have been. I shouted into his ear, because he was very deaf,

'Bob, have you ever done any night fishing up by the blasted ash?'

'Not for over sixty years,' he said, 'because one night when I was fishing there—and I swear I was sober at the time—a young woman bobbed up out of the water and climbed into my boat, which I'd staked about four yards from the bank. I was so scared that I took one leap and landed on the bank and cut off home as hard as I could go. You see, I'd heard the old tale that, years ago, the daughter of the man who lived in the house that used to stand near that tree, came home from Cambridge, where she'd been in service, with a young baby in her arms. This made her father fly into such a rage that he hurled the pair of them into the river. All that was before my time, of course, so I can't say if it's true or not. But all the old-timers swear it's true, and that's why that stretch of river is so full of bream, because no one dares go fishing there at night. But you really want to ask old Jack Maycrow all about it, though, as I know he wouldn't tell you if you did, I'll tell you myself all about what happened to him.

'When he was a young man he was courting a skivvy at Willow Row Farm. One night her boss and his missus were going to be out late, so the girl made Jack go up to the farm to keep her company, which he was pleased to do because he knew that they'd be a good supper to fill him up and that there was plenty of beer and whisky kept in the house; his girl would see to it that he got some. Well, with all that, and a bit of courting besides, Jack spent a good evening and was feeling quite a man when he set out for home about one o'clock in the morning. He'd probably have been all right if someone hadn't been in the habit of taking Bob Smith's boat and leaving it on the other side of the river so that, when Bob wanted it, he had to wait for someone to come along on the other bank and

row over. Well, Bob had got so fed up with this that, to make sure the boat was in the right place when he wanted it, he tied one end of a cart rope to it, every night, and carried the other end over the bank and through his bedroom window and round his bed post. Then he loaded his gun and stood ready.

'Jack came walking along the top of the bank until he came to the blasted tree. As he knew the story about the place being haunted, he started whistling as loud as he could, to keep his courage up. He was just passing the tree when he heard a splashing in the water and saw a woman climb out on to the bank with a baby in her arms. He was so scared that he ran like hell along the bank till he was pulled up suddenly by the rope from Bob's boat catching him under the chin. The sudden jerk on the rope tied to his bed woke up old Bob who jumped out and let off his gun through the window. All this happening at once was too much for Jack; he fainted dead away and lay there till morning, when some chap coming along the bank found him and carried him home. He was put to bed and he didn't get up again for weeks, and when he did he went round to his girl and told her that next time he'd have to get home before dark as he never wanted to see that ghost again.'

Well, that's the tale old Bob told me, and after that I didn't go fishing there again either.

Next summer two chaps from one of the Cambridge colleges came along and asked me where the best place was to get some good fishing. They had one of those boats where the sail comes down at night and makes a tent over the boat, so they could sleep on board. I told them to stake the boat near the blasted ash tree. The first few nights they didn't do any fishing as they'd been at it all day, so they used to join us in the Ship in the evenings and talk to us in the taproom.

One night, when they'd been asleep some little while on their boat, they were woken up by a lot of splashing in the water and the boat rocking. One of the chaps stuck his head out of the tent thinking that a gang of lighters must be going past, but he didn't see anything so he went back to bed. It wasn't long, though, before

they had to get up again as the boat was rocking so hard. So they dressed and came out of the tent and there, in the half-light, and through the river mist, they saw a young woman, quite naked, straddling the bow with her feet dangling in the water. One chap crept up to her and leaned forward to grab her round the waist to lift her in, but just as he had all his weight ready to lift her, he lost his balance when he found he was grabbing nothing, and fell overboard. It needed some quick work from his mate with the boat hook to save him from drowning because, as he told us afterwards, when he fell into the river, the woman hung on to his legs to stop him from swimming, and tried to pull him under the water.

Well, the pair of them sat up for the rest of the night, waiting for her to come back, but she didn't; then they brought the boat down and moored it here till they went back to Cambridge. A fortnight later the landlord of the Ship was sent a newspaper which he read out to us in the taproom, because he could read and most of us couldn't. This paper said that a mermaid had been seen in the River Ouse at Brandon Creek and that a couple of young chaps had sat and watched her for hours combing her hair at the end of their boat, and she'd collared one of them and pulled him into the river, and if it hadn't been for his pal she'd have taken him down to live with her under the water.

You can guess that, when that got around, a lot of folk came down here hoping to see the mermaid again. We all did well out of them, and I don't think any of us had to pay for our beer for a month. Then, just as things were slacking off a bit, a chap came along and told us he'd come all the way from London and that he was one of those who wrote what was printed in the newspapers. He said he was going to sleep in the daytime and keep a look-out for that young woman at night.

He had plenty of money and I must say he knew how to spend it because we all took it in turns to go on the river with him after closing time. He paid five bob an hour for our company and he always took the one

who was going to sit up with him into the big room at the Ship for a supper—though he called it dinner. Then he had a basket of grub put into the boat and there was always a bottle of liquor to keep out the cold. The only thing we didn't like about him was that he was a bit stuck up, and the landlady said that when he came back to the pub at daybreak, she had to be up and have the copper boiling because he wouldn't go to bed till he'd washed himself all over. We all thought that a waste of water and firing. The landlord, though, knew he was on to a good thing, but even he began to get fed up when his old woman started nagging him about the extra work she had to do washing out that chap's shirts and socks and things, because he wanted clean ones every morning. He got even more fed up when the chap told him we were all a lot of ignorant fools; but we all kept quiet because we knew that he was no more than a silly goose himself, but he was laying the golden eggs so we didn't mind what he called us.

Then, one day, the chap told us he was going back to London at the end of the week as he was tired of waiting, and if there really was a ghost then she'd have to show herself before the next three nights were over. I told him that, as it was my turn to watch with him on the Friday, there was a fair chance of that young woman coming then because the moon would have to change just after midnight, and it was always at the change that she came out of the river. He seemed pleased about that and said he'd have a good night's sleep on the Thursday as it didn't seem worth waiting up that night. Porky Porter didn't like that because Thursday was his turn for a good supper, but I told him he wouldn't be out of pocket as he could have my feed on the Friday because I had a job for him and his old woman to do.

Well, Friday night came and the chap took Porky into the Ship to have supper, not knowing but what he was the one who was going to sit up with him after all. When the two had finished eating they came into the taproom where we were all quite happy together. Then the landlord came in and asked the chap to settle his

bill before he went on the river because it was the time of moon that the young woman was always seen, so there was no knowing what might happen and he'd like to have his money safe. That bucked up the chap no end, and he paid the bill in gold and gave a sovereign over to make sure we wouldn't be short of beer when he left us. Then I told him that Porky had backed out of going in the boat with him because he was scared, but I was going instead and I wanted double money because it might be dangerous, and I wanted it before we started.

'My good man,' he said, 'I'll give you five sovereigns if we see that young girl tonight.'

I told him that might be all right for him, but I might not get back, so I'd be glad if he gave me two pound ten before we started and the rest could wait. After all, I said, I had an old woman at home and I'd like to know, if things came to the worst, that she'd have a pound or two by her to go on with. The chap said that, by the way everybody seemed so scared, it really looked as though he was going to see what he'd waited a month for, and he handed me over the two pound ten I'd asked for. I got the landlord to mind it for me. Then that chap nearly upset everything by telling us that he'd been in a good few places but he'd never met such a duck-hearted, frightened lot as us. He must have wondered why we all started choking into our pints, but he tried to make up for what he'd said by telling the landlord to bring the beer up in gallon jars and to see that every man had as much as he wanted. Do you know, though, every one of those men made a pint last till closing time, though they looked just like children do when they're peering at sweets in a shop window and haven't the money to buy any.

When we got outside everybody wanted to shake hands with the chap and wish him luck, and as they did this they all trod on his foot as well, so by the time we got down to the boat he was limping like a lame duck. I rowed him up to the blasted ash tree and staked the boat; then, as he didn't like me to fish when I was with him, I dozed off. I woke up, though, when I heard him swearing away at the top of his voice be-

cause he'd opened the basket and found it full of bricks instead of grub and the bottle full of water instead of whisky. I told him to hush up because a lot of things happened in the Fens that folk couldn't account for, and anything could happen on a night like this with the moon changing at midnight, and on a Friday too. Then I saw him beginning to turn round on his seat because he heard a funny noise behind him, but I told him to sit still as it was only the wind in the reeds. You see, I didn't want him to find out that the noise was being made by all the other chaps who'd followed us from the Ship and were lying on the other side of the bank busting themselves to keep from laughing.

Then the clock on Little Ouse Church struck twelve and I whispered to him,

'Well, it's now or never.'

He was shaking all over and making the boat rock, he was so scared. So I whispered again,

'Here she comes,' because I could see what he couldn't, and that was a ripple in the water coming straight towards the boat. Then I yelled in his ear,

'Hold tight, here she is.'

Bor, his eyes stood out of his head like an old toad's when he saw a pair of arms come out of the water and a pair of hands grab the side of the boat. When a face appeared, and then the top half of a woman with hair hanging down over her shoulders, he let out a shriek which I knew meant he was going to faint. So I helped him on his way by giving him a lovely bang under the chin with my fist, then, when I'd made sure he was fast asleep, I told the woman to wait a bit before she clambered into the boat so that Porky could bring her a shift to put on before the chap came round. I nipped out of the boat and ran over the bank to tell Porky to get moving quick with his bundle of clothes, and then I lay down and rolled down the bank laughing my head off, and all the other chaps there were doing the same. Then Porky came back and told us we'd have to wait a bit as his missus wanted a minute or two to get her breath back after swimming thirty yards under water.

In a little while a loud yell told us that the chap had

woken up. Porky went down to the boat alone and we others lay under the bank and peered over the top. We could hear Porky letting him have it, wanting to know what he was doing on the river at that time of night with another man's wife and saying that, if he did things like that in London, he wasn't going to do them down in the Fens. There was only one way to settle a thing like that, he said, and that was to fight in the river. So Porky started taking his clothes off while the chap yelled that he couldn't swim.

'Can't you,' said Porky, 'well, of all the fools you're the biggest, coming down on the river with another chap's wife and not able to swim. Well, that's your bad luck. Now, which way are you going? Are you going to jump in or be thrown in, for in you're going.'

And with one push he sent him overboard.

We all stood up and watched Porky hold that chap up and then let him sink until, when he did pull him out at last, he looked just like a water rat when my old bitch has played with it. Then we left him on the bank and went back to the Ship and into the stables, and we finished up the beer we hadn't seemed to be able to drink before; but it went down fine now we were back.

The chap didn't see us when he crawled back to the pub, but we watched him knock on the door and we saw the landlord come down carrying the chap's bag. He told him that if he went off now he'd get the early train; then he could have a wash when he got back to London. He couldn't have one now, he said, as the copper wasn't lit, because no-one in the Fen expected to see anyone come back alive after he'd been caught at night in a boat with another chap's wife.

Well, there wasn't any letter or newspapers sent from London to tell us about the mermaid which had waded a hundred yards into the reeds, with no clothes on, and then swum thirty yards under water. I gave Porky's wife half of the two pound ten, and everyone who'd had a hand in that little take-down of the London chap said she'd done her part well.

TOM TIT TOT

WELL, once upon a time there were a woman, and she baked five pies. And when they come out on the oven, they was that overbaked the crust was too hard for to ate. Soo says she to her darter,

'Maw'r,' says she, 'put you them there pies on the shelf an' leave 'em there a little, an' they'll soon come agin.'

She meant, you know, the crust 'ud get soft.

Well, the gal set 'um on the shelf, and says she,

'Lork! If they pies'll come agin, I'll ate 'um all now.'

Soo she set to work and eat 'um all, first and last, that she did.

Well, come supper-time, the woman said,

'Goo you and git one o' them there pies. I daresay they've come agin now.'

The gal she went, an' she looked, and there warn't nothin' but the dishes. So back she come and says she,

'Noo, they ain't come agin.'

'Not none on 'em?' says her mother.

'Not none on 'em,' says she.

'Well, come agin or not come agin,' says the woman, 'I'll ha' one for supper.'

'But you can't, if they ain't come,' says the gal.

'But I can,' says she. 'Goo you and bring the best of 'em.'

'Best or worst,' says the gal, 'I've ate 'em all, an' you can't ha' one till that's come agin.'

Well, the woman she were wholly bate, an' she took her spinnin' to the door to spin, and as she spun she sang,

'My darter ha' ate five pies today,
My darter ha' ate five pies today.'

The king he were a'comin' down the street an' he hard her sing, but what she sang he couldn't hare, so he stopped and said,

'What were that you was a singun' of, Maw'r?'

The woman, she were ashamed to let him hare what her darter had been a-doin', so she sang, 'stids o' that,

'My darter ha' spun five skeins today,
My darter ha' spun five skeins today.'

'S'ars o' mine! ' exclaimed the king. 'I never heerd tell of anyone as could do that.'

Then he said, 'Look you here, I want a wife, and I'll marry your darter. But look you here,' says he, ''leven months out o' the year she shall have all the vittles she likes to eat, and all the gownds she likes to git, and all the cump'ny she likes to hev; but the last month o' the year she'll ha' to spin five skeins ev'ry day, an' if she doon't, I shall kill her.'

'All right,' says the woman, for she thowt what a grand marriage that was. And as for them five skeins, when te come tew, there'd be plenty o' ways o' gettin' out of it, an' likeliest, he'd ha' forgot about it.

Well, so they was married. An' for 'leven months the gal had all the vittles she liked to ate, and all the gownds she liked to git, an' all the cump'ny she liked to hev.

But when the time was gettin' oover, she began to think about them there skeins an' to wonder if he had 'em in mind. But not one word did he say about 'em, and she whoolly thowt he'd forgot 'em.

Howsiver, the last day o' the last month, he takes her to a room she'd nivir set eyes on afore. There worn't nothin' in it but a spinnin' wheel and a stool. An' says he,

'Now, me dear, hare yow'll be shut in tomorrow with some vittles and some flax, and if you hain't spun five skeins by the night, yar hid'll goo off.'

An' awa' he went about his business. Well, she were

that frightened. She'd allus been such a gatless mawther, that she didn't so much as know how to spin, an' what were she to dew tomorrer, with no one to come nigh her to help her. She sat down on a stool in the kitchen, an' lork! How she did cry!

Howsiver, all on a sudden she hard a sort of a knockin' low down on the door. She upped and oped it, an' what should she see but a small little red thing with a long tail. That looked up at her right kewrious, an' that said,

'What are yew a-cryin' for?'

'Wha's that to yew?' says she.

'Nivir yew mind,' that said. 'But tell me what you're a-cryin' for?'

'That 'oon't dew me noo good if I dew,' says she.

'You doon't know that,' that said, an' twirled that's tail round.

'Well,' says she, 'that oon't dew no harm, if that doon't dew no good,' and she upped and told about the pies an' the skeins an' everything.

'This is what I'll do,' says the little red thing. 'I'll come to yar winder iv'ry mornin' an' take the flax an' bring it spun at night.'

'What's your pay?' says she.

That looked out o' the corners o' that's eyes, an' that said,

'I'll give you three guesses every night to guess my name, an' if you hain't guessed it afore the month's up, yew shall be mine.'

Well, she thowt she'd be sure to guess that's name afore the month was up.

'All right,' says she, 'I agree.'

'All right,' that says, an' lork! How that twirled that's tail.

Well, the next day, har husband he took her inter the room, an' there was the flax an' the day's vittles.

'Now there's the flax,' says he, 'an' if that ain't spun up this night, off goo yar head.'

An' then he went out an' locked the door.

He'd hardly goon, when there was a-knockin' agin the winder. She upped and she oped it, and there sure enough was the little oo'd thing a-settin' on the ledge.

'Where's the flax?' says he.

'Here te be,' says she. And she gonned it to him.

Well, come the evenin', a knockin' come agin to the winder. She upped and she oped it, and there sure enough was the little oo'd thing with five skeins of flax on his arm.

'Here te be,' says he, an' he gonned it to her.

'Now what's my name?' says he.

'What, is that Bill?' says she.

'Noo, that ain't,' says he. An' he twirled his tail.

'Well, is that Ned?' says she.

'Noo, that ain't,' says he. An' he twirled his tail.

'Well, is that Mark?' says she.

'Noo, that ain't,' says he. An' he twirled harder, an' awa' he flew.

Well, when har husband he come in, there was the five skeins riddy for him.

'I see I shorn't hev for to kill you tonight, me dare,' says he. 'Yew'll hev yar vittles and yar flax in the mornin',' says he, an' awa' he goes.

Well, ivery day the flax an' the vittles, they was brought, an' ivery day that there little red impet used to come mornin's an' evenin's. An' all the day the mawther she set a-tryin' fur to think of names to say to it when te come at night. But she niver hot on the right one. An' as that got towarts the ind o' the month, the impet that began for to look soo maliceful, an' that twirled that's tail faster an' faster each time she gave a guess.

At last te came to the last day but one.

The impet that come at night along o' the five skeins; an' that said,

'What, hain't yew got my name yet?'

'Is that Nicodemus?' says she.

'Noo, t'ain't,' that says.

'Is that Sammle?' says she.

'Noo, t'ain't,' that says.

'A-well, is that Methusalem?' says she.

'Noo, t'ain't that norther,' he says.

Then that looks at her with that's eyes like a cool o' fire, an' that says,

'Woman, there's only tomorrer night, an' then yar'll

be mine! ' An' awa' te flew.

Well, she felt that horrud. Howsomediver, she hard the king a-comin' along the passage. In he came, an' when he see the five skeins, he says, says he,

'Well, my dare,' says he, 'I don't see but what you'll ha' your skeins ready tomorrer night as well, an' as I reckon I shorn't ha' to kill you, I'll ha' supper in here tonight.'

So they brought supper, an' another stool for him, and down the tew they sat.

Well, he hadn't eat but a mouthful or so, when he stops an' begins to laugh.

'What is it?' says she.

'A-why,' he says, 'I was out a-huntin' today, an' I got awa' to a place in the wood I'd never seen afore. An' there was an old chalk pit. An' I heerd a sort of a hummin' kind o'. So I got off my hobby, an' I went right quiet to the pit, an' I looked down. Well, what should there be but the funniest little red thing yew iver set eyes on. An' what was that dewin' on, but that had a little spinnin' wheel, an' that were spinnin' wonnerful fast, an' a-twirlin' that's tail. An' as that span, that sang:

'Nimmy nimmy not,
My name's Tom Tit Tot.'

Well, when the mawther heerd this, she fared as if she could ha' jumped outer her skin for joy, but she di'n't say a word.

Next day, that there little thing looked soo malicious when he come for the flax. An' when night came, she heerd that a-knockin' agin the winder panes. She oped the winder, an' that come right in on the ledge. That were grinnin' from are to are, an' Oo! That's tail were twirlin' round so fast.

'What's my name?' that says, as that gonned her the skeins.

'Is that Solomon?' she says, pretendin' to be afeard.

'Noo, t'ain't,' that says, an' that come fudder into the room.

'Well, is that Zebedee?' says she agin.

'Noo t'ain't,' says the impet. An' then that laughed, an' twirled that's tail, till yew cou'n't hardly see it.

'Take time, woman,' that says; 'next guess an' you're mine.' An' that stretched out that's red hands at her.

Well, she backed a step or two, and she looked at it, an' then she laughed out, an' says she, a-pointin' of her finger at it,

'Nimmy nimmy not,
Yar name's Tom Tit Tot.'

Well, when that hard her, that shruck awful, an' awa' that flew into the dark, an' she niver saw it noo more.

CAP O' RUSHES

WELL, there was once a very rich gentleman, and he'd three darters. And he thought to see how fond they was of him. So he says to the first,

'How much do you love me, my dear?'

'Why,' says she, 'as I love my life.'

'That's good,' says he.

So he says to the second,

'How much do you love me, my dear?'

'Why,' says she, 'better nor all the world.'

'That's good,' says he.

So he says to the third,

'How much do you love me, my dear?'

'Why, I love you as fresh meat loves salt,' says she.

Well, he were that angry.

'You don't love me at all,' says he, 'and in my house you stay no more.'

So he drove her out there and then, and shut the door in her face.

Well, she went away, on and on, till she came to a fen. And there she gathered a lot of rushes, and made them into a cloak, kind o' with a hood, to cover her from head to foot, and to hide her fine clothes. And then she went on and on till she came to a house.

'Do you want a maid?' says she.

'No, we don't,' says they.

'I haven't nowhere to go,' says she, 'and I'd ask no wages, and do any sort of work,' says she.

'Well,' says they, 'if you like to wash the pots, and scrape the saucepans, you may stay,' says they.

So she stayed there, and washed the pots, and scraped the saucepans, and did all the dirty work. And because she gave no name, they called her Cap o' Rushes.

Well, one day there was to be a great dance, a little way off, and the servants was let to go, and look at the grand people. Cap o' Rushes said she was too tired to go, so she stayed at home. But when they was gone she offed with her cap o' rushes, and cleaned herself, and went to the dance. And no one there was so finely dressed as her.

Well, who should be there but the cook's son, and what should he do but fall in love with her the minute he set eyes on her. He wouldn't dance with anyone else.

But before the dance were done, Cap o' Rushes she slipped off, and away she went home. And when the other maids was back, she was framin' to be asleep with her cap o' rushes on.

Well, next morning they says to her,

'You did miss a sight, Cap o' Rushes.'

'What was that?' says she.

'Why, the beautifullest lady you ever see dressed

right gay and ga'. The cook's son he never took his eyes off her.'

'Well, I should ha' liked to have seen her,' says Cap o' Rushes.

'Well, there's to be another dance this evening, and perhaps she'll be there.'

But, comes the evening, Cap o' Rushes said she was too tired to go with them. Howsumdever, when they was gone she offed with her cap o' rushes, and cleaned herself, and away she went to the dance.

The cook's son had been reckoning on seeing her, and he danced with no one else, and never took his eyes off of her. But before the dance was over, she slipped off, and home she went, and when the maids came back she framed to be asleep with her cap o' rushes on.

Next day they says to her again,

'Well, Cap o' Rushes, you should ha' been there to see the lady. There she was again gay and ga', and the cook's son he never took his eyes off her.'

'Well, there,' says she, 'I should ha' liked to ha' seen her.'

'Well,' says they, 'there's a dance again this evening, and you must go with us, for she's sure to be there.'

Well, come the evening, Cap o' Rushes said she was too tired to go, and do what they would she stayed at home. But when they was gone, she offed with her cap o' rushes, and cleaned herself, and away she went to the dance.

The cook's son was rarely glad when he see her. He danced with none but her, and never took his eyes off of her. When she wouldn't tell him her name, nor where she came from, he gave her a ring, and told her if he didn't see her again he should die.

Well, afore the dance was over, off she slipped, and home she went, and when the maids came home, she was framing to be asleep, with her cap o' rushes on.

Well, next day they says to her,

'There, Cap o' Rushes, you didn't come last night, and now you won't see the lady, for there's no more dances.'

'Well, I should rarely like to ha' seen her,' says she.

The cook's son he tried every way to find out where the lady was gone, but go where he might, and ask

whom he might, he never heard nothing about her. And he got worse and worse for the love of her till he had to keep his bed.

'Make some gruel for your son,' they says to the cook. 'He's dying for love o' the lady.'

The cook she set about making it, when Cap o' Rushes came in.

'What are you a-doin' on?' says she.

'I'm going to make some gruel for my son,' says the cook, 'for he's dying for love of the lady.'

'Let me make it,' says Cap o' Rushes.

Well, the cook wouldn't at first, but at last she said yes; and Cap o' Rushes made the gruel. And when she had made it, she slipped the ring into it on the sly, before the cook took it upstairs.

The young man he drank it, and he saw the ring at the bottom.

'Send for my mother,' says he. So up she comes.

'Who made this here gruel?' says he.

'I did,' says the cook, for she was frightened.

And he looked at her.

'No you didn't,' says he. 'Say who did it, mother, tell the truth.'

'Well, then, 'twas Cap o' Rushes,' says she.

'Send Cap o' Rushes here,' says he.

'Did you make the gruel?' says he.

'Yes, I did,' says she.

'Where did you get this ring?' says he.

'From him as gave it me,' says she.

'Who are you then?' says the young man.

'I'll show you,' says she.

And she offed with her cap o' rushes, and there she was in her beautiful clothes.

Well, the cook's son he got well very soon, and they was to be married in a little time. It was to be a very merry wedding, and everyone was asked far and near.

And Cap o' Rushes' father was asked. But she never told nobody who she was. But afore the wedding she went to the cook, and says she,

'I want you to dress every dish without a mite o' salt.'

'That'll be rarely nasty,' says the cook.

'That don't signify,' says she.

'Very well,' says the cook.

Well, the wedding-day came, and they was married. And arter they was married all the company sat down to their vittles.

When they began to eat the meat, that was so tasteless they couldn't eat it. But Cap o' Rushes' father he tried first one dish and then another, and then he burst out crying,

'What is the matter?' said the cook's son to him.

'Oh,' says he, 'I had a darter, and I asked her how much she loved me, and she said, "As much as fresh meat loves salt." And I turned her from my door, for I thought she didn't love me. And now I see she loved me best of all. And she may be dead for aught I know.'

'No, Father, here she is,' says Cap o' Rushes.

And she goes up to him, and puts her arms round him. And so they was happy ever arter.

MARY WHO WERE AFEARD O' NOTHIN'

SHE lived first with a farmer, and he and his friends were a-drinking one night and they ran out of licker. So the farmer he up and say,

'Never you mind, my girl will go down to the public and bring us up another bottle.'

But the night was very dark, so his friends they say.

'Surelie, she'll be afeard to go out such a dark night by herself all alone.'

But he say,

'No she won't, for Mary's afeard o' nothin' that's alive nor dead.'

So she went and she brought 'em back their licker, and his friends they say it was a very funny thing she shewd be so bold. But the farmer he say,

'That's nuthin' at all, for she'd go anywhere day or night for she ain't afeard o' nothin' that's alive nor dead.'

And he offered to bet a golden guinea that none o' them could name a thing she would not dew. So one of 'em agreed to take the bet and they were to meet the same day as it might be next week and he was to set her her task. Meanwhile, he goes to the old passon and he borrows the key of the Church, and then he goes to the old sexton and right-sided it with him for half the guinea to go into the church and hide himself in the dead house so that he was to frighten the Fearless Girl when she came.

So when they all met together at the farmer's, he say,

'This is what your Mary won't dew—she won't go into the Church alone at midnight and go into the dead house and bring back a skull bone.'

But she made no trouble about it and up and went down to the church all along of herself and she opened the door of the dead house and she picked up a skull bone.

Then the old sexton behind the door he muffled out,

'Let that be, that's my mother's skull bone.'

So she put it down and picked up another. Then the old sexton he muffled out again,

'Let that be, that's my father's skull bone.'

So she put that down tew, and took up still another and she say out loud, for she'd lost her temper,

'Father or mother, sister or brother, I must hev a skull bone and that's my last word.'

And so she up and walked out with it, and she locked the door of the dead house behind her and she

come home, and she put the skull bone on the table and she say,

'There's your skull bone, master.'

And she was for going back to her work.

But him as had made the bet he up and say,

'Didn't yew hear nothing, Mary?'

'Yes,' she say, 'some fule of a ghost called out to me, "Let be, that's my father's skull bone, and let be, that's my mother's skull bone," but I told him right straight that father or mother, sister or brother, I must hev a skull bone, so I tuk it and her't be, and then as I was goin' away arter I had locked the door, I heard the old ghost a-hallering and shrieking like mad.'

Then him as had made the bet was rarely upset, for he guessed it was the old sexton a-hallerin' about for fear of being locked up all alone in the dead house. And so it was, for when they ran down to let him out they found him lying stone dead on his face, a dead-o-fright.

And it sarved him right to try and terrify a poor mawther. But her master he gave her the golden guinea he had won.

A little while after, down in Suffolk there was a Squire and his mother, a very old lady and she died and was buried. But she would not rest and kept on coming into the house 'specially at meals'. Sometimes you could see all of her, sometimes not all, but you'd see a knife and fork get up off the table, and play about where her hands should be.

Now that upset the servants so much that they would not stop, and the Squire was sadly put to to know what he should do. One day, he heard of the girl who were afeard o' nothin', three villages off. So he rode over, and told her all about it, and asked her if she would come as servant, and she said she paid no regard to ghosts, so she would come; but that it ought to be considered in her wages.

And so it was and she went back with the Squire. First thing she did was allus to lay a place regular for the ghost at meals, and she took great care not to put the knife and fork criss-cross way. And she used to

hand her the vegetables and the rest just as if she were real. And would say, 'Peppaw, mum,' or 'Salt, mum' as it might be. This seemed to please the old ghost, but nothing come of it till Squire had to go up to London on some law business.

Next day, Mary was down on her knees a-cleaning the parlour grate when she noticed a thin thing push in through the door, which was just ajar, and open out wide when it got into the room; she turned out to be the old ghost.

Then the ghost she up and spoke for the first time and she say,

'Mary, are you afeard of me?'

And the girl say,

'No, mum, I've no call to be afeard of yew, for yew are dead, and I'm alive.'

That fairly flummoxed the old ghost, but she went on and say,

'Mary, will yew come down into the cellar along o' me—yew musent bring a light, but I'll shine enow to light you.'

So they went down the cellar steps, and she shone like an old lantern, and when they got down she pointed to some loose tiles and said,

'Pick yew up those tiles.'

So she did, and there were tew bags of gold, one a big 'un, and one a little 'un, and she said,

'Mary, that big bag's for your master, and that little bag's for yew, for you are a fearless girl, and desarve it.'

Then off went the old ghost and never was seen no more and Mary had a main o' trouble to find her way up in the dark out of the cellar.

Then in three days' time, back there came the Squire and he said,

'Morning, Mary, hae yew seen anything of my mother since I've been away?'

And she said,

'Iss, Sir, that I hev, and if yew ain't afraid of coming down into the cellar, along o' me, I'll show yew something.'

And he larfed, and said he wornt afraid if she wornt.

So they lit a candle and went down and she opened up the tiles and she say,

'There are the tew bags of gold, the little one is for yew, and the big 'un is for me.'

And he say,

'Lor! '

For he thought his mother might have given him the big one (and so she had), but he took what he could.

And the fearless girl, she ollus afterwards crossed the knives and forks, to keep the ghost from telling what she had done. But after a while the Squire thort it all over, and he married Mary the fearless girl, so arter all he got both bags of gold, and he used to tell her off good and proper whensoever he got drunk. And I think she desarved it, for deceiving the old ghost.

A CURE FOR A FAIRY

IN Fenland a hundred years ago, the Fens were smothered with fairies. Everybody believed in them, except the parson, and he had good cause to think there was something supernatural about them.

It happened like this. One night old Billy Bowers, the local poacher, was returning home with his bag

heavy with what he'd found in the woods, and as he walked by the churchyard, he saw a flittering light. So he stopped on his way and peered through the fence, and saw that it was one of the so-called local fairies gathering earth off a new-made grave.

Well, Billy don't like to see that, so he went home, got his old muzzle loading gun, put a charge of gunpowder into it, and then filled it up with broken rock salt, which he used to use to cure rabbit skins. So he went back up the lane, and he saw this fairy's behind bobbing up and down in the lantern light. So he took aim and he fired.

Well, the screech that fairy gave woke everybody up in the neighbourhood. They all opened their bedroom windows to hear her screaming. Soon they was congregating round the churchyard gate. One said,

'This is a job for the parson.'

So he went along, called the parson up. The parson wanted to know what was the trouble,

'Well,' he said, 'all the devils in Hell are running round the churchyard, shrieking their insides out.'

So the parson got up, and he called this man in, and he said,

'Before we go, we'd better have something to put some courage into us.'

So he produced a bottle of whisky, took a good drink himself, and then handed a good drink to the other chap, who, by the way, was the sexton. Then the parson put on his surplice, in case there was something, and he picked up one of these new-fangled oil lamps, grabbed a big stick, and went across to the churchyard gate. He wanted the sexton to go with him. The sexton said his was a day job, he wasn't paid for night work. No one else wanted to go. So the parson said he'd go on his own.

As he went down the churchyard, the fairy who'd had a dose of rock salt in her buttocks saw something coming the other way. Her gave a scream, and run down the churchyard. The parson followed her but, catching his foot on a tombstone, the lamp flew out of his hand, and burst into flames.

Billy thought it was time he took a hand. So he

went into the church, and he rang the bells for all he was worth. That caused all the jackdaws in the church steeple to fly out, and hover just over the heads of the people standing in the road with lanterns. So Billy went along and wanted to know what they was all out there for at that time of night. Someone told him that the Devil was in the churchyard. He'd come out of Hell, and when he came out of Hell, there was a flame of fire went up into the sky, and they hadn't seen the parson since, so they supposed the Devil had took him.

So Billy says,

'Well, ain't none of you going in to see what's happened to him?'

They said, 'No.'

'Well,' he said, 'I'll go.'

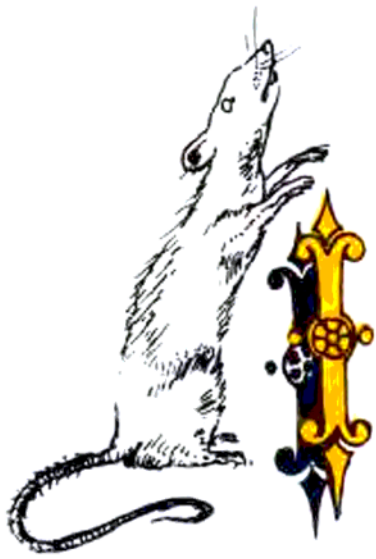
So he went along, and he found the parson laying there with his face all covered with blood, where he'd hit his nose on the tombstone as he fell. Billy said,

'I'm surprised! That must have been a hell of a fight you was in. I wonder what the other chap looks like, you being so covered with blood.'

But the parson said if he'd only help him home, he'd give him whatever he'd like to ask. So Billy helped him home, and the parson promised him that he'd have a brace of pheasants off of him all the time the game season lasted. But Billy used to sit in the pub and tell his tale.

He said, 'People as thinks they knows think there's a lot of ways of curing fairies.' He said, 'There's only one—pepper their hams with rock salt. That'll cure 'em! '

HOW OUD POLLY GORST CUM AGIN



IT was an old-fashioned low-roofed room with an open chimney, with fire on the hearth and seats along the chimney corners, on which sat Widder Andrews, Widder Beales, Widder Stimpson, Bet Scarf and Billy Gorst (otherwise Silly Billy). The widders seemed in great trouble, groaning loudly and rocking backwards and forwards, while Billy was smoking a short pipe, and kicking the cat whenever the widders were not looking. Through the diamond-paned window, they now saw a young lady coming up the path to the cottage. Billy put his pipe into his pocket and escaped by the back door.

The warden entered. All the widders got up and made their 'obedience', but did not leave off groaning, except to say,

'Bless you, dear Miss Mary, for a-coming to see we poor widders. That fare a sight of months as you ha' bin awar, that du, and we ha' missed you good tidy! O lorks, O lorks, for to think what we ha' come tew. But now we shall ha' someone for tew dole tew, we shall, Miss Mary.'

'Yes, yes, do tell me all about your troubles, pray! I am so sorry to see you all so miserable.'

'Ah! We du concate as you are our friend, Miss Mary, soo we'll tell you all about that fust and last, we widders will. Look you hare, Miss Mary, you know this hare house was guv to Banningham only for widders,

that was. Well, if the Budd (the Parish overseers) didn't goo an' put in oud Polly Gorst an' her son, Silly Billy. We widders hollared out good tidy, when they come, we did. Why, Miss, I du sar that was breaking of the law about the widders' house. We was to live here in peace, an' squat without no min to trouble, and we are too oud to stand Billy's noise.

'Mrs Anders an' me is on our ninety-four, an' Mrs Stimpson is on her ninety-eight, an' Bet Scarf is on her eighty-seven. Well, I sar we widders fared right comfortable as we poor widders can ever hope to be afore Polly Gorst come in here. But, lork! We never had a squat day since she cum, the oud toad! But, lork, Miss, we han't no mander o' quiet after she cum; we con't do nothin' to please her, and she was a-scoldin' all dar and a-cryin' all night. Yes, Miss, she were the most horrid, miserable oud toad; and as to Billy, why he stolt our things, an' sold 'um fur to buy backy with, an' she got wus and wus, she did. But one dar she was took ill, an' she died. Lork, Miss, how pleased we widders was.

'But, s'ars o' mine, if she din't cum agin. One night just as Mrs Anders was a-gooin' to sleep, she fared to hare a noise, an' lork, if she din't see oud Polly Gorst as plain as plain cum shufflin' into the room. She must ha' cum through the key-hole; that there door was shut an' the window tew. Up she cum to the bed of the side she used to lar on, an' she hove an' hove at the pillar to make that comfortable, an' then she got into the bed, an' there she lar, she did, till the morren. Well, Mrs Anders she never spoke to her; she just turned round an' went off to sleep, an' when she woke in the morren, why, oud Polly was gone!

'"Why, she felt like a bundle of fluff," said Mrs Anders.

'And arter that dar we widders we han't no squat why the oud toad! She won't wait like a dacent ghost till that was dark; she cum a shufflin' an' a frimicken' about all dar. You see, Miss, if she got a shillin' guv her, why she goo an' hide that under the bricks, soo we concate she cum for to look for 'um. Yes, Miss, I warrant we was wholly done.

'Lork, Miss, why Bet Scarf she was a-cummin' home round by the pond the other dar, an' if she didn't see oud Polly sit on the top of the gate as bold as brass. How she did snare at Bet, an' she tried to kitch a hold on her, but Bet she picked up a horse-shoe, lar on the road, an' she copped that at oud Polly, an' if she din't see that oud horse-shoe go right through her, that did. Bet she run awar, an' when she looked back, why, Polly was gone.

'There, Miss Mary, I marn't goo on all dar, only what I sar is we han't no mander of squat night nor dar. Folks goo an sar as how that all cum of the rats, drottle 'um! Why, Miss, they don't know nothin' belong to oud ghosts, they don't. Dear Miss Mary, you know better, an' that du us good to dole about it. Ah, goodbye, Miss, an' thank you for your kind present. We'll get some comfort with it.'

A day or two after Miss Mary, the warden, called again on the widders.

'Ah, Miss Mary, bless you for cummin' agin, an' we've good news to tell you. After you went away last time we set a dollerin', foreby that oud ghost she cum wus than ever a-scuppin' at the bricks like mad, an' looking in at the winder an' laughin' at us. When we wus at the wus the door ope'd, an' who should cum in but Mrs Caller, the wise woman.

' "Well," says she, "you du look miserable, you du. I set last night a-connin' of my Star Book, an' I fared to hare a voice sar, goo an' see them oud widders, so I've cum to hare what's the matter."

'Well, we tode her all about Polly fust an' last. She never spok a wud, but she sat for half an hour a-thinkin'. At last she hollared out, "I'll settle her," and awar she went. Well, the next dar she cum agin, an' she set down a-laughin' fit to bust. "Lork! I ha' wholly done her," says she, when she could spake.

' "Look you here. I ha' been in an' out among ghosts all my life, an' I know a deal about 'um. I allus keep a lot o' branches of the aspin tree under my bed to keep the Evil One off. That wood that's the strongest charm you can get. Well, I took a bundle of them branches along of me, an' off I went to yer churchyard, jest

afore the oud sun wus agoin' to get up, an' if I din't see oud Polly a-creepin' into her grave, safe an' sure. Well, I set to work an' I bound they branches acrost an' acrost of her grave, I did. I fared to hear a sort of a whimperin' when I'd done, but I says: You ha' got to lar where you are now! "'

'Well, Miss Mary, we din't here nothin' last night, an' we fare right happy agin. How we thank Mother Caller; and we all had a comfortable cup of tea together.'

Miss Mary congratulated the widders, but did not tell them her father had sent the rat-catchers, who had killed a sturdy family of rats in their backyard, nor did she tell them of a visit she had paid to the gamekeeper's wife, who was a relation of Polly Gorst, an' whom she found in a great rage at the report of Polly's 'walking.' She did tell them, though, that her father had sent Billy Gorst to the workhouse.

'Why, look you here, Miss Mary,' Polly's relation had cried, 'if she got to the good place she won't want to cum back.'

'And if she got to the bad place she won't ha' the chance! '

* * *

The Farmer goo to market,
An' Johnny goo to plough,
The Missus mind the baby,
An' Dolly milk the cow;
An' Sally feed the piggies,
An' the chickabidies too;
An' the baby clap that's hands tew hare
The cockadooledoo!

The folks as goo, an' farm that way,
Will oluss have a farm that pay.

Lancashire

THE FAIRY FUNERAL

THERE are few spots in Lancashire more likely to have been peopled by fairies than that portion of the highway which runs along the end of Penwortham wood. By the foot of the Castle Hill there is a little farm-house, with meadow land stretching away to the broad river; and one night, fifty or sixty years ago, two men, one of whom was a local 'cow-doctor', whose duties had compelled him to remain until a late hour, set out from this dwelling to walk home to the straggling village of Longton.

It was near upon midnight when they stepped forth, but it was as light as mid-day, the moon shining in all her beauty, and casting her glamour upon the peaceful scene. So quiet was it that it seemed as though even

the Zephyrs were asleep. There was not a breath of wind, and not a leaf rustled or a blade of grass stirred, and had it not been for the sounds of the footsteps of the two men, who were rapidly ascending the rough cart-track winding up the side of the hill, all would have been as still as death.

The sweet silence was a fitting one, for in the graveyard by the side of the lane through which the travellers were passing, and over the low moss-covered wall of which might be seen the old-fashioned tombstones, erect like so many sentinels marking the confines of the battlefield of life, hundreds were sleeping the sleep with which only the music of the leaves, the sough of the wind, and the sigh of the sea seem in harmony.

As the two men opened the gate at the corner of the churchyard, the old clock sounded the first stroke of midnight.

'That's twelve on 'em,' said the older of the two.

'Ay, Adam,' said the other, a taller and much younger man. 'Another day's passin' away, an' it con't dee wi'eaut tellin' everybody; yet ther's bod few on us as tez onny notice on't, for we connot do to be towd as wer toime's growin' bod short. I should think as tha dusn't care to hear th' clock strike, Adam, to judge bith' colour o' thi toppin', for tha'rt gerrin' varra wintry lookin'.'

The old man chuckled at this sally, and then said, slowly and drily,

'Speyk for thisen, Robin, speyk for thisen; an' yet why should ta speyk at o? Choilt as tha are—an' tha art nobbut a choilt, clivver as tha fancies thisen -tha'rt owd enough to mind as it's nod olus th' grey-heeoded uns as dees th' fost. Th' chickins fo' off th' peeark mooar oftener nor th' owd birds.'

Their conversation brought the two beyond the gate and some distance along the avenue, in which the moonlight was somewhat toned by the thickness of the foliage above, and they were rapidly nearing the lodge gates, when suddenly the solemn sound of a deep-toned bell broke the silence. Both men stopped and listened intently.

'That's th' passin'-bell,' said Adam. 'Wodever con

be up? I never knew it rung at this toime o' th' neet afooar.'

'Mek less racket, will ta,' said Robin. 'Led's keep count an' see heaw owd it is.'

Whilst the bell chimed six-and-twenty both listeners stood almost breathless, and then Adam said,

'He's thy age, Robin, chuz who he is.'

'Ther wer no leet i' th' belfry as wi' come by, as I see on,' said the young man. 'I'd raythер be i' bed nor up theer towlin' ad this toime, wudn't tha?'

'Yoi,' said Adam. 'But owd Jemmy dusn't care, an' why should he? Hee's bin amung th' deeod to' long to be freet'nt on 'em neet or day, wake an' fable as he is. I dar' say hee's fun aat afooar neaw as they'r not varra rough to dale wi'. Ther's nod mich feightin i' th' buryhoyle, beaut ids wi' th' resurrectioners. Bud led's get to'art whoam, lad; we're loikely enough to larn a abāat it to-morn.'

Without more words they approached the lodge, but to their great terror, when they were within a few yards from the little dwelling, the gates noiselessly swung open, the doleful tolling of the passing-bell being the only sound to be heard. Both men stepped back affrighted as a little figure clad in raiment of a dark hue, but wearing a bright red cap, and chanting some mysterious words in a low musical voice as he walked, stepped into the avenue.

'Ston back, mon,' cried Adam in a terrified voice. 'Ston back; it's th' feeorin; bud they'll not hort tha if tha dusna meddle wi' 'um.'

The young man forthwith obeyed his aged companion, and standing together against the trunk of a large tree, they gazed at the miniature being stepping so lightly over the road, mottled by the stray moonbeams. It was a dainty little object; but although neither Adam nor Robin could comprehend the burden of the song it sang, the unmistakable croon of grief with which each stave ended told the listeners that the fairy was singing a requiem. The men kept perfectly silent, and in a little while the figure paused and turned round, as though in expectation, continuing, however, its mournful notes.

By and by, the voices of other singers were distinguished, and as they grew louder the fairy standing in the roadway ceased to render the verse, and sang only the refrain, and a few minutes afterwards Adam and Robin saw a marvellous cavalcade pass through the gateway. A number of figures, closely resembling the one to which their attention had first been drawn, walked two by two, and behind them others with their caps in their hands, bore a little black coffin, the lid of which was drawn down so as to leave a portion of the contents uncovered. Behind these again others, walking in pairs, completed the procession. All were singing in inexpressibly mournful tones, pausing at regular intervals to allow the voice of the one in advance to be heard, as it chanted the refrain of the song, and when the last couple had passed into the avenue, the gates closed as noiselessly as they had opened.

As the bearers of the burden marched past the two watchers, Adam bent down, and, by the help of a stray gleam of moonlight, saw that there was a little corpse in the coffin.

'Robin, mi lad,' said he, in a trembling voice and with a scared look, 'it's th' pictur o' thee as they hev i' th' coffin! '

With a gasp of terror the young man also stooped towards the bearers, and saw clearly enough that the face of the figure borne by the fairies indeed closely resembled his own, save that it was ghastly with the pallor and dews of death.

The procession had passed ere he was able to speak, for, already much affrighted by the appearance of the fairies, the sight of the little corpse had quite unnerved him. Clinging in a terrified manner to the old man, he said in a broken voice,

'It raley wor me, Adam! Dust think it's a warnin', an' I'm abaat to dee?'

The old man stepped out into the road as he replied,

'It wur a quare seet, Robin, no daat; bud I've sin monny sich i' mi toime, an' theyne come to nowt i' th' end. Warnin' or not, haaever,' he added, with strong common sense, 'ther'll be no harm done bi thee livin' as if it wur one.'

The mournful music of the strange singers and the solemn sound of the passing-bell could still be heard, and the two awe-struck men stood gazing after the cavalcade.

'It mon be a warnin',' again said Robin, 'an' I wish I'd axed um haa soon I've to dee. Mebbee they'n a towd me.'

'I don't think they wod,' said Adam. 'I've olus heeard as they'r rare and vext if they'r spokken to. Theyn happen a done tha some lumberment if tha 'ad axed owt.'

'They could but a kilt mi,' replied Robin, adding, with that grim humour which so often accompanied despair, 'an' they're buryin' mi neaw, ar'nod they?' Then in a calm and firm voice he said, 'I'm baan to ax 'em, come wod will. If tha'rt freetent tha con goo on whoam.'

'Nay, nay,' said Adam warmly, 'I'm nooan scaret. If tha'rt for catechoizing um, I'll see th' end on it.'

Without further parley the men followed after and soon overtook the procession, which was just about to enter the old churchyard, the gates of which, like those of the lodge, swung open apparently of their own accord, and no sooner did Robin come up with the bearers than, in a trembling voice, he cried,

'Winnot yo' tell mi haaw lung I've to live?'

There was not any answer to this appeal, the little figure in front continuing to chant its refrain with even deepened mournfulness. Imagining that he was the leader of the band, Robin stretched out his hand and touched him. No sooner had he done this than, with startling suddenness, the whole cavalcade vanished, the gates banged to with a loud clang, deep darkness fell upon everything, the wind howled and moaned round the church and the tombstones in the graveyard, the branches creaked and groaned overhead, drops of rain pattered upon the leaves, mutterings of thunder were heard, and a lurid flash of lightning quivered down the gloomy avenue.

'I towd tha haa it ud be,' said Adam, and Robin simply answered,

'I'm no worse off than befooar. Let's mak' toart

whoam; bud say nowt to aar fowk—it ud nobbut free ten th' wimmin.'

Before the two men reached the lodge gates a terrible storm burst over them, and through it they made their way to the distant village.

A great change came over Robin, and from being the foremost in every countryside marlock he became serious and reserved, invariably at the close of the day's work rambling away, as though anxious to shun mankind, or else spending the evening at Adam's talking over 'th' warnin'.'

Strange to say, about a month afterwards he fell from a stack, and after lingering some time, during which he often deliriously rambled about the events of the dreadful night, he dozed away. And Old Jemmy, the sexton, had another grave to open, and the greyheaded Adam was one of the bearers who carried Robin's corpse along the avenue in which they had so short a time before seen the fairy funeral.

OLD NANCY AND THE SILVER TOKEN

BELIEVE i' Fairies? Ay, that I do, though I never clapped mi een on 'em,' said old Nancy to a group of gaping listeners seated by the farm-house kitchen-fire.

'That's quare,' remarked a young woman in the ingle nook.

Old Nancy gave her a scournful glance, and then went on,

'I never see'd a fairy as I know on, but I used to sarve one on 'em wi' milk. Yo' mon stare; but th' way on it wir this. I wir at mi wark i' th' dairy one day, abaat th' edge o' dark, when o ov a suddent a loile jug clapt itself daan afooar mi on th' stooan. Yo' may be sure I wir fair capt, for wheear it come fray, or heaw it geet theear, I couldn't mek aat. I stoopt mi daan to pike howd on it, and it met a' bin silver, it wir that breet and bonnie; but it wir as leet as a feather, an' I couldn't tell what it wir med on.

'I wir baan to set it o' th' stooan again, when I seed at a new sixpenny bit hed bin put theer wi' it, so it struck mi as milk wir wantit. Accortingly I fillt th' jug and seet it daan again, an' welly, as soon as I'd clapt it wheear I fun' it, it up an' whipt eaut o' seet.

'Well I thowt it meeterly quare, bud I'd heeard mi feyther say, monny an' monny a toime, as thuse as geet fairy brass gin 'em should tell nubry, so I kept it to mysen, though I'd hard wark, yo' may be sure. Every neet th' jug an' th' sixpenny bit clapt theirsens o' th' stooan as reglar as milkin' toime, an' I fillt th' jug and piked up th' brass.

'At last, ha'ever, I thowt happen no lumber could come on it if I towd nobbut one, so when Roger theear and me settlet a beein wed I towd him what sooart ov a nest-egg I'd getten so quarely. My feyther wir reet, ha'ever, for th' next neet nayther jug nor th' sixpenny bit showed thersels, an' fray that day to this I've sin no mooar on 'em, an' it's ower forty year sin I picked up th' last brass.'

THE HEADLESS WOMAN

IT was near upon twelve when Gabriel Fisher bade good night to the assembled roysterers who were singing and shouting in the kitchen of the White Bull, at Longridge, and, turning his back to the cosy hearth, upon which a huge log was burning, emerged into the moonlit road. With his dog Trotty close at his heels, he struck out manfully towards Tootal Height and Thornley, for he had a long and lonely walk before him. It was a clear and frosty night, but occasionally a light cloud sailed across the heavens, and obscured the moon. Rapidly passing between the two rows of cottages which constituted the little straggling village, his footsteps ringing upon the frozen ground, Gabriel made for the fells, and, as he hurried along, he hummed to himself a line of the last song he had heard, and now and again burst into a fit of laughter as he remembered a humorous story told by 'Owd Shuffler', him of whom it was said 'he'll seawk lamp-oil through a 'bacco-pipe iv onybody'll give him a droight o' ale to wesh it deawn wi'.' Anyway, Owd Shuffler could certainly 'talk th' leg off a brass pan', that's for sure.

When he reached the highest point of the road whence he could see the beautiful Chipping valley, a soft breeze was whispering among the fir-trees, with that faint rustle suggestive of the gentle fall of waves upon a beach. Here and there a little white farm-house or labourer's cottage was gleaming in the moonlight, but the inmates had been asleep for hours.

There was an air of loneliness and mystery over everything; and though Gabriel would have scorned to admit that he was afraid of anything living or dead, before he had passed out of the shadow of the weird-looking melodious branches he found himself wishing for other company than that of his dog. He suddenly remembered, too, with no access of pleasurable feelings, that on the previous day he had seen a solitary magpie, and all sorts of stories of 'Banister Dolls' and 'Jinny Greenteeths', with which his youthful soul had been carefully harrowed, came across his mind. He tried to laugh at these recollections, but the attempt was by no means a successful one, and he gave expression to a hearty wish that Kemple End were not quite so far off.

'Sich wark as this ma'es me t'scrat where aw dunno itch,' he said.

Just then a sharp shrill cry fell upon his ear, and then another and another.

'Th' Gabriel Ratchets,' he shouted, 'what's abaat to happen?'

The cries were not repeated, however, and he went on, but when he reached the peak of the fell, and gazed before him into the deep shade of a plantation, he could not repress a slight shudder, for he fancied that he saw something moving at a distance. He paused for a moment or two to assure himself, and then went on again slowly, his heart throbbing violently as he lessened the space between the moving object and himself. The dog, as though equally influenced by similar feelings, crept behind him in a suspicious and terrified manner.

'It's nobbut a woman,' said he, somewhat reassured; 'it's a woman sewerly. Mebbee someburry's badly, an' hoo's gooin' for help. Come on, Trotty, mon.'

So saying, he quickened his pace, the dog hanging behind, until he approached almost close to the figure, when, with a wild howl, away Trotty fled down the hillside. As Gabriel drew still closer, he saw that the object wore a long light cloak and hood, and a large coal-scuttle bonnet; and surprised to find that the sound of his footsteps did not cause her to turn to see who was following, he called out,

'It's a bonny neet, Missis; bud yo're aat rayther late, arn't yo'?'

'It is very fine,' answered the woman, in a voice which Gabriel thought was the sweetest he had ever heard, but without turning towards him as she spoke.

'Summat wrong at your fowk's, happen?' he asked, anxious to prolong the talk.

There was no reply to this, though, and Gabriel knew not what to think, for the silent dame, although she declined to reply, continued to keep pace with him, and to walk at his side. Was it someone who had no business to be out at that hour, and who did not wish to be recognised, he wondered? But if so, thought he, why did she continue to march in a line with him? The voice, certainly, was that of one of a different rank to his own; but, on the other hand, he reflected, if she were one of the gentle folks, why the cottager's cloak and bonnet, and the huge market basket?

These conjectures crossed his brain in rapid succession; and influenced by the last one—that as to his companion's clothing—he determined again to address her.

'Yo' met a left yir tung at whoam, Missis,' said he, 'sin' yo' cannot answer a civil mon.'

This taunt, however, like the direct query, failed to provoke an answer, although the startled Gabriel could have sworn that a smothered laugh came from beneath the white cloth which covered the contents of the basket.

'Let me carry yer baskit,' said he; 'it's heavy for yo'.'

Without a word, the woman held it out to him; but, as Gabriel grasped the handle, a voice, which sounded as though the mouth of the speaker were close to his hand, slowly said,

'You're very kind, I'm sure.' And then there came from the same quarter a silvery peal of laughter.

'What i' th' warld can it be?' said Gabriel, as without more ado he let the basket fall to the ground. He did not remain in ignorance very long, however, for, as the white cloth slipped off, a human head, with fixed eyes, rolled out.

'Th' yedless boggart! ' cried he, as the figure turned to pick up the head, and revealed to him an empty bonnet.

Away he fled down the hill, fear lending him speed. He had not run far, however, before he heard a clatter of feet on the hard road behind him; but Gabriel was one of the fleetest lads about the fells, and the sight he had just seen was calculated to bring out all his powers; so the sound did not grow louder. But just as he turned into the old Chaighley Road, the head, thrown by the boggart, came whizzing past in unpleasant proximity to his own, and went rolling along in front of him.

For a second or two Gabriel hesitated what to do, the headless woman behind and the equally terrible head in front; but it did not take long to decide, and he went forward with renewed vigour, thinking to pass the dreadful thing rapidly rolling along in advance of him. No sooner was he near to it, however, than, with an impish laugh, which rang in his ears for days afterwards, the ghastly object diverged from its course and rolled in his way. With a sudden and instinctive bound, he leaped over it; and as he did so the head jumped from the ground and snapped at his feet, the teeth striking together with a dreadfully suggestive clash. Gabriel was too quick for it, however, but for some distance he heard with horrible distinctness the clattering of the woman's feet and the banging of the head upon the road behind him.

Gradually the sounds grew fainter as he speeded along, and at length, after he had crossed a little stream of water which trickled across the lane from a fern-covered spring in the fell side, the sounds ceased altogether. The runner, though, did not pause to take breath until he had reached his home and had crept beneath the blankets, the trembling Trotty, whom he

found crouched in terror at the door of the cottage, skulking upstairs at his heels and taking refuge under the bed.

'I olus said as tha'd be seein' a feeorin wi' thi stoppin' aat o' neets,' remarked his wife after he had narrated his adventure; 'bud if it nobbut meks tha fain o' thi own haath-stooan I'se be some glad on it, for it's moor nor a woman wi' a heead on her shoothers hes bin able to do.'

THE LANCASHIRE WITCHES

LANCASHIRE is a famous and noted place, abounding with rivers, hills, woods, pastures and pleasant towns, many of which are of great antiquity. It is also famous for witches, and the strange pranks they played.

Some time since lived one Mother Cuthbert, in a little hovel at the bottom of a hill, called Wood and Mountain Hill (Pendle). This woman had two lusty daughters, who both carded and spun for their living, yet were very poor, which made them often lament their want. One day as Mother Cuthbert was sauntering about the hill-side, picking the wool off the bushes, out started a thing like a rabbit, which ran about two or three times and then changed into a hound, and afterwards into a man, which made the old dame tremble, yet she had no power to run away. The man, putting a purse of money in her hand, and charging her to be there the

next day, immediately vanished away, and old Mother Cuthbert returned home in envy and fear.

The old woman opened not her purse until she came home, and then found in it ten angel coins; so, calling to her daughters, she told them what had happened. The wenches rejoiced that the treasure of the house had increased, that they might stuff themselves with beef and pudding which they had long been strangers to; and advised their mother to go again as he had ordered, and so she did.

The first thing she saw was a tree rising out of the ground which moved towards her, and, to her surprise, multiplied into a very thick wood round her, so that she was afraid of losing herself, when on a sudden she saw a house, and heard the sound of music. This appeared most strange; however, she took courage and went towards it, when she found a great many women all dancing and revelling; and the house appeared like a stately palace, and the tables were furnished with a great variety of delicacies.

The dance being ended, she was desired to sit at the table with the rest, but she hesitated at first, till at length, being hungry, she fell roundly to. After dinner the matron who received her, by striking the floor with her wand, caused various familiars, in the shape of cats, bears, apes and others, to enter and dance while she played on the gridiron and tongs.

This done, taking Mother Cuthbert aside, she demanded how she liked the cheer and sport. She answered very well, but desired to know where she was and her company.

Mother Crady then told her that she was Witch of Penmure, a great mountain in Wales, and the rest were her countrywomen. And wishing to have her of the sisterhood, she had contrived this way to entertain her, to show her that she might always live rich and merry.

Mother Cuthbert, overcome with persuasions, consented, when immediately they anointed her breast with a certain ointment, then, speaking a charm or two, they gave her the rest to use upon occasion, and also in another box a little thing like a mole, that was to be her imp. So, all mounting upon a coal-staff, away

they flew and she with them; but they left her at the door of her own house, and kept still on their way with the wind.

Mother Cuthbert being thus entered into the society of witches, by the force of her ointment, and counsel of her imp, who could speak when he pleased, and turn himself into divers shapes, finding the power she had, began to play many pranks.

Sometime before this, the Mayor of Lancaster had caused Mother Cuthbert to be whipped for breaking his pales to make a fire in the cold winter, which she resented much; and now, knowing her power to revenge it, she trudges thither, where she found him carousing with many friends.

She took an opportunity to slip a letter into his hands, and retired unknown, which he had no sooner read, but telling his company he must run a race, he immediately went into the next room, and stripped himself stark naked. Then, taking a hand-whip, he ran into the street, lashing his sides and back, crying, 'There he goes! I win! I win! '

Whilst the people followed, calling him to stay, thinking he was mad, yet he ran on to the further end of the town, lashing himself till he was bloody. At which time, coming to his wits, he was in the greatest consternation, swearing the devil had put this trick upon him; for all the time he imagined he had been on horseback, and was riding a race, not feeling the lashes he gave himself till he had completed his number, and filled the measure of the witch's resentment.

Mother Cuthbert, growing more and more perfect in her art, resolved to bring in her daughters to witchcraft; they were content to be ruled by the mother, and she anointed them, and used the best means she was able to make them perfect in their new trade.

Their names were Margery and Cicely. One time Cicely, the younger daughter, fell in love with a gentleman's son who lived about a mile from their home. Since he was too high and mighty to wed her, she decided to have him in her arms at any rate. Therefore, knowing he liked hunting, she often turned herself into a hare to make him sport, and still drew him

towards her mother's house; for when he went that way he used to call in to chat with them; and that was what had caused in Cicely the first fatal passion.

But once this had liked to have proved fatal; for the charm wanting something of its force, one of the leading hounds had caught her by the haunches, just as she was entering her creep-hole, and gave her a terrible pinch. Happy was it for her that she was so near, or her loving had been forever spoiled.

The young man, supposing the hare to have run into the house, entered and found Cicely rubbing her back in some pain. Puzzled, he went away, and she for the future grew cautious of showing him any more sport of that kind.

But when he was going to be married to a beautiful young gentlewoman, she by enchantment caused the lady to lose herself in a wood, and there cast her in a deep sleep for a day and a night. In the meantime she impersonated the bride. But knowing it could not long continue, she cast him likewise into a deep sleep, and then fetched the young lady to his arms, so that when they both awaked, they thought they had been all the time together.

Yorkshire and Lincolnshire

THE FLAYCROW

SAMUEL Sutcliffe lived at Hebden Hay, or Haeden Hole, about a quarter of a mile west of Newbridge, nearly at the bottom of the steep slope which descends from Whitehill Nook to the River Hebden. The house is still standing, easy to be recognised by its whitewash and by the yew-tree which grows between the door and the path leading to Upper Hepton and Tommy Rocky's. It is from Samuel, commonly called Sammy o' Kattie's, that I heard this tale.

My brother Tom were a rare bird to drink. He'd been to t' Horse and Jockey one day, and had supped enough beer for once, and when he came out about half after ten, he warn't ower clear as to t' direction he sud go. Howm'even, he took t' loin all right. Presently there come someone along t' road.

'Now,' thowt he, 'I mun keep clear o' he, or he'll run hissel' again' me, and knock me down.'

T' mooin were up, just settin', and castin' shadows; so he made a great roundabout to avoid lurching again' t' man as were comin' along; but seeing his shadow, ma brother mistook that for t' man, and thowt t' shadow had cast t' feller. So he tried to step ower t'

chap and avoid t' shadow. As tha mun see, he came wi' a crack again' t' chap.

'Ye druffen rascal,' said he, giving ma brother a bang on t' lugs as made his head spin.

'It's thy fault,' said Tom. 'What dost a' mean by having a standing-up shadow and solid too?'

The chap gives him another crack and tumbles him down. When ma brother got up again he went on his road, saying to hissel',

'I winna go blundering again' no more shadows to-night if I see anybody coming.'

Just then he thowt he saw another chap; so to get out o' his way he turned into a field by a gate to let un pass. Now, my brother had a little too much beer in his head; soa when he got into t' field he couldn't get out again. He rambled round and round, and t' mooin went down.

'Weel,' ses he, 'I don't care; I'll sleep where I am.'

And he ligs him down on t' ground. He hadn't been long asleep afore he wakened wi' cold. T' dews o' neet came falling on him and wetted him, and his teeth were chattering; so then he opened his eyes. And what dost a' think he seed? Why, standing above him were a hawful form as black as a crow. His legs was crooked, his arms was spread, and Tom could see claws on his fingers. His face were like nowt earthly; and he had bristling hair, and great horns like a coo. Tom could see t' glint o' his wicked een fixed on him.

Weel, now, Tommas weren't that sort o' chap exackly as might flatter hissen angels 'ud come after him out o' heaven; so the thowt came on him it were t' owd chap come to fetch his soul to t' other place.

Tom lay quite still. He thowt t' owd chap mebbe would let un lig a while if he shammed sleep. He wouldn't be so unmannerly as to wake un up for the purpose o' takin' him away. Tha knaws t' owd chap war' a gem'man once, tho' he's fallen a bit sin'. Yet what's born i' t' bone comes out i' t' flesh—leastwise so Tom thowt.

Soa Tom lay quiet. But presently he thowt he felt t' owd chap's fingers feeling in his pocket for four and twopence he'd gotten aboot him somewhere. Soa Tom

turned round sudden on him and ses,

'Ah! Ye dirty waggabone! Thou stealing rascal! Thou cock-eyed raggamuffin! Tha mun tak ma soul if tha's boun' to do soa; but I'll trouble thee to let t' four and twopence aloan.'

And Tom wor upon him in no time. He caught un by t' neck and shook un furious. He wor nigh brussen wi' rage. The chap were fair down capped, and said nowt.

Ah, he war' a deep one war' t' owd chap. As sharp as owt, when Tom turned on un, he were standing up stiff and unconcerned, and looking t' other way.

Nah, as Tom had spoken, 't warn't no use his pretending any more to be asleep. So he thowt,

'What am I to do next? Tha mun do more wi' traycle than tha can wi' brimstone. I'll soap un down a bit.'

Then Tom opens his eyes and looks at un and ses, 'Owt fresh?'

But he wound't answer and reveal the mysteries o' his shop.

So Tom ses, ses he,

'I reckon tha'st coom a rare long way, and it's thirsty work walking, or flying, or travelling by train, or whichiver way tha hast comed. And,' ses he, 'I tak it vara civil o' thee to come for me. There's ma owd woman grummles if shoo's to come for ma to t' Horse and Jockey, and that's half a mile from my home. And mebbe tha's comed for me five thousand mile. It's vara civil. It's not like a north countryman that,' ses he.

'We are outspoken folk, and there ain't much civility among us, but hard rubs. But I won't be outdone by a south countryman i' civility. I daresay tha'rt dry. Tha'll stop a bit, and I'll fetch thee a sup o' home-brewed beer.'

Soa Tom gets up on his feet, and away he goes as wick as a scoprell, and gets home, and dashes in at t' door. There were Sarah Anne, his wife, as red as a turkey-cock, and swollen fit to brussen wi' he getting home so late.

But Tommy he out wi' it at once.

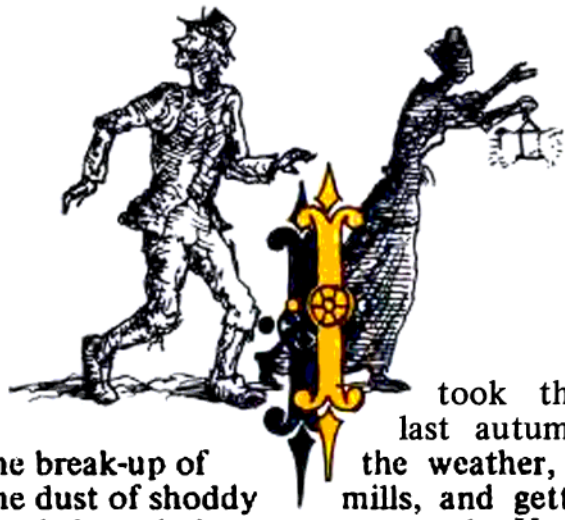
'Sarah Anne, lass! Run and get a jug o' beer and a

mug, and off wi' thee as fast as tha can to t' owd chap—he's waiting for thee.'

He thowt, tha knaws, to get t' owd chap to tak t' wife instead of he. But Sarah Anne, she up wi' her fist and knocked him down as falt as ginger-beer as has had t' cork out a fortnight.

Weel, next morning ma brother Tom hoo went to look at t' place where he was i' t' neet, and there he see'd t' owd chap still... But by day leet—what dost a' think? He was nowt but a flaycrow (scarecrow).

THE BOGGART OF HELLEN POT



I took the opportunity last autumn, just before the break-up of the weather, of shaking off the dust of shoddy mills, and getting a whiff of smokeless air in a run among the Yorkshire moors. I spent the first night at Bolton, and slept soundly, after a ramble through the beautiful Wharfedale, and an examination of the Strid, where the river gushes through a rift in the rock so narrow that it is supposed possible to stride across it.

I hardly knew whither I rambled, but I certainly got into Silverdale, for I lunched on my bread and cheese with Peny Ghent towering above me on the west, and beyond it rose the glorious pile of Ingleborough. As I munched, I caught the sound of a moorland shepherd counting his sheep in the time-honoured Yorkshire way,

'Yain, tain, eddero, peddero, pitts, tayter, later, overro, coverro, dix, yain-dix, tain-dix, eddero-dix, peddero-dix, bumfit, yain-o-bumfit, tain-o-bumfit, eddero-bumfit, peddero-bumfit, jiggit.'

As I walked on towards Arncliffe, I suddenly became aware of someone walking rapidly after me, trying evidently to overtake me. It was now getting late and the stars gave light enough for me to discern the figure as that of a man; his walk was strange, a wriggle and duck accompanying each step.

'Good evening, friend,' said I; 'I'm a stranger lost on the moor: can you direct me towards Arncliffe?'

'On, on with me,' was the answer, and the hand was waved as though pointing forward.

'Dark night this,' I said.

'Darker below,' he muttered, as though to himself; 'darker, darker, darker.'

'Shall we have a bit of moon, think you, presently?'

He made no answer, just hobbled on before me, beckoning me to follow. I was puzzled with my strange companion, and felt somewhat uneasy. There was something uncanny about his appearance and his manner.

Presently we came near water, as I judged by the sound, which was that of a beck murmuring among stones. Just then my conductor seemed to vanish. I called, but there was no reply. I stood still and listened, but heard nothing save the bubbling of the stream, and, far, far away, the to-whoo of an owl.

I thought that if I followed the beck, it would lead me to the river, and the river would guide me to some habitation. So I stumbled on over the water-worn stones, and splashed into water. The banks rose higher and, as I looked up, I saw the rugged outline of rock and furze on the eastern bank, and on top of a huge block stood a distorted human figure. It was that of my strange companion.

Down the slope he came with wriggle and jump; he came straight towards me, spread out his arms—in a moment they were clasped round me, and I was lifted from my feet. I was so astonished that I made no resistance at first, and it was only after he had taken

a dozen steps with me, and I heard the splash of the beck falling into what must be a pot, and saw the black yawning hole open before me, and felt the man bending as though about to leap down it with me in his arms, that I tore my right arm loose, and caught at a young rowan tree which leaned over the gulf.

At the same moment there flashed before my eyes the light of a lanthorn, the flame small and yellow, yet sufficient to light up the face of the bearer—a young woman, the countenance wondrously beautiful, but full of woe unutterable.

The lanthorn passed across the open mouth of the pot. The moment it became visible the arms which held me were unclasped, and I saw the man sink down the abyss, with the light reflected from his upturned face. He went down it, not with a whizz as a falling stone, but slowly as a man might sink in water. Thus I was well able to observe his white face and wide eyes fixed with horror on the lanthorn flame.

Having recovered my feet, naturally my first thought was to run up the bank, and get as far as possible from the ugly well into which I might have been dragged. My next was to look round for the young woman who bore the light. I could see the lanthorn at some little distance, but I could not distinguish the bearer.

I called to her; she lifted the light till her hand came within its radiance. The small white hand beckoned me to follow. I ran to catch her up, but the faster I pursued, the swifter glided the flame before me. When I stopped, she stopped; when I advanced, she moved onwards; always keeping the same distance ahead of me. So we must have proceeded for a couple of miles, when suddenly the light went out, and at the same instant I became conscious of a small farm-house lying before me.

In no time at all, I had entered the enclosure which surrounded it, and had rapped hastily at the door. A gaunt moorland farmer opened it, and looked at me with surprise.

'Can you let me have shelter for a little while, and then a guide to Arncliffe?' I asked. 'I have lost my

way, and have met with a strange adventure, which has somewhat shaken my nerves.'

'Sit here; come here; sit thee down there,' he said, pointing to the ingle corner with the stem of his pipe, and, then, closing and bolting the door, he stalked over to the opposite corner and sat down on a rocking chair. He eyed me musingly, and smoked steadily without making any remark. After having puffed away for ten minutes, he shouted at the top of his voice,

'Gi'e him a glass of ale, lass.'

'A'm boune to, lad,' replied a voice from the back-kitchen; and looking over my shoulder, I noticed that there was a woman in the little lean-to back room, fettling up by the light of a rush-candle.

'Thou'rt none boune to Arncliffe to-neet?' said the man, slowly withdrawing his pipe from his mouth.

'I am, if you will direct me,' I replied, 'for I have a friend there who is expecting me.'

'Humph! '

He smoked for ten minutes more, and then said,

'And what brought thee this road?'

'I will tell you,' I replied; and then proceeded to relate what had happened to me. As soon as I mentioned the strange companion I had met with—

'It's t' Boggart, lass! ' called the farmer to his wife, 'he's gotten agait misleading folk again.'

When I spoke of the flash of light before which the man had quailed, and which had revealed the face of a woman, pale and sad, bending over it—

'Weel done, Peggy! ' roared the farmer; "tis no but Peggy wi' t' lanthorn, lass,'—again to his wife.

'She's a good 'un,' responded the lady from the kitchen.

'Who are the Boggart and Peggy?' I asked; 'they seem to be intimate acquaintances of yours.'

The great Yorkshireman did not answer, but whiffed away, with his dreamy eyes fixed on the fire.

'So t' Boggart thowt to ha' hugged thee down Pothoile! '

Then he laughed.

'I reckon,' mused he again, 'I reckon he were a bit flayed to see Peggy come anent him that road! '

'I wish,' said I, 'that you would tell me all about him and her.'

'So I will, lad, bi'm bye, if thou'rt boune to Arncliffe to-neet. Gi'e us a leet, lass! ' called the man to his wife, knocking the ashes from his pipe, rising, and taking down a lanthorn.

The good woman lighted the candle for him, and the great Yorkshireman shut the lanthorn door, took up his cap, and said to me,

'Now, if thou'rt boune to come, come on.'

I rose and followed him. He led the way, and as we walked towards Arncliffe he told me the following tale.

Some hundred years ago there lived a young woman in a cottage near Kettlewell. A strange man came into the neighbourhood, gained her affections, and married her. They settled at the little farm in which my guide now lived.

They had not lived a twelvemonth together before the constables entered the house one evening, and took the man away. He already had a wife and family living at Bolton, in Lancashire. As they were carrying him off, he broke from them and fled over the moors, and was never retaken.

By some it was supposed that he had escaped to America, but by others that he had fallen into one of the pots and had perished. His poor second wife, Peggy, was heart-broken and wandered all that night searching for him, and was found dead on the side of Penigent next morning.

'And they say,' added my guide in a low voice, 'that she seeks him still; and when she's gotten him she'll tak' him before the throne of God to be sentenced for having ruined her happiness, and been the cause of her death. That's why he's so flayed of meeting wi' she, and sma' blame to him.'

So beware you idle traveller on the Yorkshire moors; keep a wary eye out for the Boggart of Hellen Pot.

A POTTLE O' BRAINS

ONCE i' these parts, an' not so long gone naythe, there was a fool as wanted to buy a pottle o' brains, for he was iver gettin' into scrapes through his foolishness, an' bein' laughed at by iveryone. Fo'ak tellt him as he could get everything a liked from tha wise woman as lived on the top o' the hill, an' dealt in potions an' herbs an' spells an' things, an' could tell thee all as 'd come to thee or thy folk. So he tellt 's mother, 'n axed her if a should seek tha wise woman 'n buy a pottle o' brains.

'That ye should,' says she, 'thou'st sore need o' them, my son; an' ef a should dee, who'd take care o' a poor fool such 's thou, no more fit to look arter thysel' than an unborn babby? But min' thy manners, an' speak her pretty, my lad; fur they wise fo'ak are gey'an light mispleased.'

So off he went after 's tea, an' there she was, sittin' by tha fire, an' stirrin' a big pot.

'Good e'en, missis,' says he, 'it's a fine night.'

'Aye,' says she, an' went on stirring.

'It'll mebbe rain,' says he, an' fidgetted from one foot to t'other.

'Mebbe,' says she.

'An' mappen 't 'ull no,' says he, an' looked out o' the window.

'Mappen,' says she.

An' he scratched 's head, an' twisted 's hat.

'Well,' says he, 'a can't min' nuthin' else aboot tha weather, but lemme see; the crops is gittin' on fine.'

'Fine,' says she.

'An'—an'—,' says he, 'n comes to a stop. 'A reckon we'll tackle business noo, hevin' done tha perlite like. Hev' ye ony brains fur to sell?'

'That depen's,' says she, 'ef thou wants king's brains, or sodger's brains, or schoolme'aster's brains, a dinna keep 'em.'

'Hout no,' says he, 'jist ord'nar brains—fit fur any fool—same 's everyone has 'bout here; suthin' clean common-like.'

'Aye so,' says tha wise woman, 'a might manage that, ef so be thou'll help thysel'.'

'Hoo's that fur, missis?' says he.

'Jest so,' says she, lookin' in 's pot; 'bring me the heart o' tha thing thou likes best o' all, an' a'll tell thee where to get thy pottle o' brains.'

'But,' says he, scratching his head, 'hoo can a do that?'

'That's no 'on fur me to say,' says she, 'fin' oot fur thysel', my lad! Ef thou disna want to be a fool a' thy days. But thou'll hev' to read me a riddle so's a can see thou'st brought the reet thing, an' ef thy brains is 'boot thee. An' a've suthin' else to see to,' says she, 'so gode'en to 'ee.'

And she carried the pot away wi' her into tha back place.

So off goes the fool to 's mother, an' tellt her what tha wise woman said.

'An' a reckon a'll hev to kill that pig,' says he, 'fur a like fat bacon better nor iverythin'.'

'Then do't, my lad,' said 's mother, 'fur sartain 't 'ull be a stra-ange an' good thing fur 'ee, ef thou canst buy a pottle o' brains, an' be able to look arter thy ain sel'.'

So he killed 's pig, an' nex' day off a went to tha wise woman's cottage, an' there she sat, readin' in a great book.

'Gode'en, missis,' says he, 'a've brought thee tha heart o' tha thing a likes best o' all; an' a put it hapt i' paper on tha table.'

'Aye so?' says she, an' looked at him through her spec'itals. 'Tell me this then, what rins wi'oot feet?'

He scratched 's head, an' thowt, but a couldn't tell.

'Go thy ways,' says she, 'thou'st no fo't me the reet thing yet. I'se no'on brains fur 'ee today.'

An' she clapt the book togither, an' torned 's back.

So off tha fool went to tell 's mother.

But as a got nigh the hoose, oot came fo'ak runnin' to tell un 'at 's mother was deein'.

An' when he got in, 's mother ony looked at un, an' smiled, 's if to say she could leave un wi' a quiet min, sence a'd got brains 'nuff noo to look arter 's sel'—an' then she dee'd.

So doun a sat, an' the more a thowt aboot it the badder a feeled. He minded hoo she'd nuss't un when a wor a tiddy brat, an' he'ped un wi' 's lessons, an' cooked 's dinners, an' mended 's clouts, an' born wi' 's foolishness; an' a felt sorrier 'n sorrier, while a began to sob an' greet.

'Oh, mother, mother! ' says he, 'who'll tak' care on me noo? Thou shouldn't hev' lef' me alo'an, fur a liked thee better nor iverything.'

An' as he said that, he thowt of the words o' the wise woman.

'Hi, yi! ' says he, 'must a cut oot mother's heart an' tak' it to her? A disna like the job.'

An' he took oot a knife an' felt 's edge.

'No, a can't do't,' says he. 'What'll a do? What'll a do to get that pottle o' brains, noo a'm alone i' the worl'?'

So a thowt an' thowt, an' next day a went an' borrowed a sack, an' bundelt 's mother in, an' carried it on 's shuwther up to th' wise woman's cottage.

'Gode'en, missis,' says he. 'A reckon a've fo't 'ee the reet thing this time, surely.'

An' he plumped the sack down kerflap! in the doorsil.

'Mebbe,' says the wise woman, 'but read me this, noo, what's yaller an' shinin' but isna goold?'

An' he scratched 's head, an' thowt, an' thowt, but a couldna tell.

'Thou'st no hit the reet thing, my lad,' says she. 'I doubt thou's a bigger fool nor a thought! '

An' she shut the door in 's face.

'See there! ' says he, an' sets doun by tha roadside an' greets.

'A've lost tha on'y twae things as a cared for, an' what else can a fin' to buy a pottle o' brains wi'?'

An' he fair howled, till tha tears ran doun into 's mooth. An' oop came a lass as lived gainhand, an' looked at un.

'What's oop wi' thee, fool?' says she.

'Oo a's killed ma pig, 'n lost ma mother, an' a'm nobbut a fool mysel',' says he, sobbin'.

'That's bad,' says she; 'an' hevna thee anybody to look arter thee?'

'Naw,' says he, 'an' a canna buy my pottle o' brains fur thurs nuthin' a like best lef'.'

'What art ta'alkin' aboot?' says she.

An' doun she sets by him, an' he tellt her all aboot the wise woman an' the pig, an' 's mother an' the riddles, an' 'at he was alo'an i' the warld.

'Weel,' says she, 'a wouldn't min' lookin' arter thee mysel'.'

'Could thee do't?' says he.

'Ou, ay,' says she, 'fo'ak says as fools mak' good husban's, an' a reckon a'll hev thee, ef thou'st willin'.'

'Can'st cook?' says he.

'Ay, a can,' says she.

'An' scrub?' says he.

'Surely,' says she.

'An' men' ma clouts?' says he.

'A can that,' says she.

'A reckon thou'lt do then 's weel 's anybody,' says he; 'but what'll a do 'bout this wise woman?'

'Oh, wait a bit,' says she, 'suthin' mowt turn up, an' it'll no matter ef thou'rt a fool, s'long 's thou's got me to look arter thee.'

'That's true,' says he, an' off tha went and got married. An' she kept 's house so clean an' neat, an' cooked 's dinner so fine, 'at one night a says to her,

'Lass, a'm thinkin' a like thee best o' iverything, arter all.'

'That's good hearin',' says she, 'an' what then?'

'Hev a got to kill thee, dost think, an' take thy heart

oop to the wise woman for that pottle o' brains?'

'Laws, no! ' says she, lookin' skeered, 'a winna hev that. But see here; thou didn't cut oot thy mother's heart, did tha?'

'Naw; but if a had, mebbe a'd a got my pottle o' brains,' says he.

'Not a bit o't,' says she; 'jist thou take me 's a be, heart 'n all, 'n a wager a'll help thee read the riddles.'

'Can thee so?' says he, doubtful like; 'a reckon thon's too hard for wimmen fo'ak.'

'Weel,' says she, 'let's see noo. Tell's the first 'un.'

'What rins wi'oot feet?' says he.

'Why, watter! ' says she.

'It do,' says he, an' scratched 's head.

'An' what's yaller an' shinin', but isna goold?'

'Why, the sun! ' says she.

'Faix, it be! ' says he. 'Coom, us'll go oop to the wise woman towanst.'

And off they went. An' as they comed oop the pad, she wor sittin' at the door, twinin' straws.

'Gode'en, missis,' says he.

'Gode'en, fool,' says she.

'A reckon a's fo't 'e the reet thing to last,' says he, 'thoff a hevn't azac'ly cut th' heart oot, it be so moocky wark.'

The wise woman looked at 'em both, an' wiped her spec'itals.

'Canst tell me what that be, as has firs nae legs, an' then twae legs, an' en's wi' fower legs?'

An' the fool scratched 's head, an' thowt, an' thowt; but a couldna tell. An' the lass whispered in 's ear,

'It be a tadpole.'

'Mappen,' says he then, 'it mout be a tadpole, missis.'

The wise woman nodded 's head.

'That's reet,' says she, 'an' thou'st got thy pottle o' brains a'ready.'

'Wheer be they?' says he, lookin' aboot, an' feelin' in 's pockets.

'In thy wife's head,' says she. 'The on'y cure fur a fool 's a good wife to look arter 'n, an' that thou'st got; so gode'en to 'ee! '

An' wi' that she nodded to 'em, an' up and into the hoose.

So they went ho'am together, an' a niver wanted to buy a pottle o' brains age'an, fur's wife 'ad enuff fur both.

THE BARGEST OF GRASSINGTON

'OU see,' said Billy, 'as how I'd been a-clock-dressing at Gerston (Grassington), an' I'd stayed raither lat, an' may-be gitten a lile sup o' spirit, but I war far from bein' drunk, an' knaw'd everything 't pass'd. It war about eleven o'clock when I left, an' war at back end o' t' year; an' it war a grand neet.

T' mooin war varra breet, an' I nivver seed Rylston Fell plainer i' a' my life. Now, yo' see, I war passin' down t' mill loin, an' I heerd summut cum past me, brush, brush, brush, wi' chains rattlin' a' t' while; but I seed nowt; an' thowt I to mysen', now, this is a most mortal queer thing. An' I then stuid still, an' luik'd about me, but I seed nowt at a', nobbut t' two stane walls on each side o' t' mill loin.

Then I heerd again this brush, brush, brush wi' t' chains; for, yo' see, when I stuid still it stopp'd; an' then, thowt I, this mun be a Bargest, 'at sae mitch is said about; an' I hurried on toward t' wood brig, for they say as how this Bargest cannot cross a watter; but, lord, when I gat ow'r t' brig, I heerd this same thing

again; so it wud other hev cross'd t' watter, or gane round by t' spring head (only thirty miles!).

An' then I becom' a valiant man, for I war a bit freeten'ed afore; an', thinks I, I'll turn an' hev a peep at this thing. So I went up Greet Bank towards Linton, an' heerd this brush, brush, brush wi' t' chains a' t' way, but I seed nowt; then it stopp'd a' of a sudden.

So I turn'd back to gan hame, but I'd hardly reich'd t' door when I heerd again this brush, brush, brush, an' t' chains, going down towards t' Holin House, an' I follow'd it, an' t' mooin then shone varra breet, an' I seed it tail!

Then, thowt I, thou owd thing! I can say I've seen the' now, so I'll away hame. When I gat to t' door there wor a girt thing like a sheep, but it war bigger, liggin' across t' threshold o' t' door, an' it war woolly like; an', says I,

'Git up,' an' it wouldn't git up; then, says I, 'Stir thysel'! ' an' it wouldn't stir itsel'.

An' I grew valiant, an' rais'd t' stick to baste it up, an' then it luiked at me, an' sich oies! They did glower! An' war as big as saucers, an' like a cruell'd ball; first there war a red ring, then a blue one, then a white one; an' these rings grew less an' less, *till they cum to a dot*!

Now, I war nane fear'd on it, tho' it grinned at me fearfully; an' I kept on sayin',

'Git up an' stir thysel'! '

An' t' wife heeard as how I were at t' door, an' she cum to oppen it, an' then this thing gat up an' walk'd off, *for it war more fear'd o' t' wife than it war o' me*!

An' I call'd wife, an' she said it war t' Bargest, but ah've nivver seed it since; an' that's a true story.'

* * *

See all, hear all, say nowt,
Eat all, sup all, pay nowt;
And if tha does owt for nowt,
Allus do it for thisen.

MOTHER SHIPTON

Knaresborough was once the home of Ursula Southeil, a misshapen child with a big body, huge head and an ugly face, although she had a very clever brain. She lived in the sixteenth century, dying in 1561 on the very day and at the very hour she had foretold. Ursula married Toby Shipton of Shipton, near York, and spent her last years in a cheerless cave now half hidden by trees above the River Nidd at Knaresborough. It is known as Mother Shipton's Cave.

Hideous though she was, she was respected for her skill in magic. One story of her runs as follows.

Having learnt that Cardinal Wolsey was to visit York she declared that he would, in fact, never do so. Hearing of this the Cardinal was angry and immediately sent the Duke of Suffolk, Lord Percy and Lord Darcy to her house, all of them disguised. A man called Master Besley, who lived in York, conducted the three into Mother Shipton's presence. When they came to her door one of them knocked.

'Come in, Master Besley, and the honourable lords with you,' called Mother Shipton.

All thought this strange, for how could she know who her visitors were since she had never met them? In they went and found Mother Shipton sitting by a great fire. She welcomed all four by name, sent for cakes and ale and entertained them in hospitable fashion.

'Ah,' said the Duke of Suffolk, 'if only you knew what we have come about you would not make us so welcome.

You said the Cardinal should never see York.'

'Nay,' replied Mother Shipton, 'I said he might see York, but never set foot within it.'

'I tell you,' went on the Duke, 'when the Cardinal comes to York you shall be burned.'

'We shall see,' replied Mother Shipton, and as she spoke she plucked her kerchief from her head and threw it in the fire. To the astonishment of her visitors it did not burn. Then she calmly lifted it out of the flames and replaced it, unscorched, on her head.

'What do you mean by that?' demanded the Duke.

'If this had burned I might have burned,' was the reply.

Not long afterwards Cardinal Wolsey visited Cawood, only eight miles from York. As someone pointed to the distant walls of the city, the Cardinal said,

'When I come there Mother Shipton shall burn as a witch.'

But that very night he was arrested by order of King Henry VIII and soon afterwards died at Leicester.

So her prophesy came true.

But the prophesy which added most to the ancient mother's fame is the following:

Carriages without horses shall go,
And accidents fill the world with woe;
Around the world thoughts shall fly
In the twinkling of an eye.

The world upside down shall be,
And gold be found at the root of a tree.
Through hills man shall ride,
And no horse be at his side.

Under water men shall walk,
Shall ride, shall sleep, shall talk.
In the air men shall be seen
In white, in black, in green.

Iron in the water shall float
As easily as a wooden boat.
Gold shall be found and shown
In a land that's now not known.

TIDDY MUN

HILES syne, afore-that dykes wor made, an' that river-bed changed, what that Cars wor nobbut bog-lands, an' full o' watter-holes, that wor teemin', as thou mayst a'heerd wi' Boggarts and Will-o'-tha-Wykes, an' sich loike; voices o' deed folks, an' hands wi'outen airms, that came i' tha darklins, moanin' an' cryin' an' beckonin' all night thruff; todlowries dancin' on tha tussocks, an' witches ridin' on tha great black snags, that turned to snakes, an' raced about wi' 'em i' tha watter; my word! 'Twor a stra-ange an' ill place to be in, come evens.

Folk wor gey skeered on un nat'rally, an' wouldna goo nigh un wi'outen a charm o' some sort, just a witches pink or a Bible-ball, or the loike o' that. A'll tell thee 'bout them another toime. Tha shook wi' froight, a tell thee, whan tha found their sels i' tha Cars at darklins. For sartain, tha wor mostly shakin' i' they toimes; for tha agur an' fever were terrible bad, an' thar wor poor weak crysoms, fit for nowt but to soop gin an' eat op'um.

In ma young days, we'd all tha agur; tha women ower tha fire, tha men out i' tha garth, even tha bairns had tha shakes reg'lar. Ay, mebbe tha's better off noo, but a don't know, a don't know, tha's lost Tiddy Mun. Weel, weel. Tha kenned foine that the fever an' agur comed fra tha bogs, but so come as tha heerd tell, that tha ma-ashes mun be drained as tha ca' it, tha wor sore

miscontended, for tha wor used to un, an' ther feythers afore 'em, an' tha thowt, as tha sayin' is, bad's bad, but meddlins wuss.

Tha tell't un fine tales, 'at tha mists 'ud lift, an' tha bogs 'ud come i' tha molds, an' th'ud be no'on agur; but tha misliked tha changement, an' wor main fratched wi' tha Duchies, who comed across tha seas for tha delvin.

Tha folk would na give tha Duchies vittles, or beddin', or fair words; no'on let 'em cross tha door-sill; an' tha said to each ither, tha said, as t'ud be ill days for the Cars, an' tha poor Car-folk, so-be tha bog-holes wor meddled wi', an' Tiddy Mun wor unhapped.

For thee know'st, Tiddy Mun dwelt in tha watter-holes doun deep i' tha green still watter, an' a comed out nobbut of evens, whan tha mists rose. Than a comed crappelin out i' tha darklins, limpelty-lobelty, like a dearie wee au'd gran'ther, wi' lang white hair, an' a lang white beardie, all cotted an' tangled together; limpelty-lobelty, an' a gowned i' gray, while tha could scarce see un thruff tha mist, an' a come wi' a sound o' runnin' watter, an' a sough o' wind, an' laughin' like tha pyewipe screech.

Tha wor none so skeered on Tiddy Mun like tha boggarts an' such hawiver. A worn't wicked an' tantrummy like tha watter-wives; an' a worn't white an' creepy like tha Dead Hands. But natheless, 'twor sort o' shivery-like when tha set round tha fire, to hear the screechin' laugh out by the door, passin' in a skirl o' wind an' watter; still tha only pulled in a bit nigher together, an' lispit wi' a keek ower tha shouther,

"'Arken to Tiddy Mun! '

Mind ye, tha au'd Mun hurted none, nay, a wor real good to un at times. Whan tha year wor geyan wet, and tha watter rose i' tha marshes, while it creepit up to the door-sill, an' covered tha pads, come tha fust New Moon, tha feyther an' mither, an' a' tha brats, ud go out i' tha darklins, an' lookin' ower the bog, called out together, thoff mappen a bit skeered an' quavery like,

'Tiddy Mun, wi'out a name,
tha watters thruff! '

an' all holdin' on togither an' tremblin', a'd stan' shakin' an' shiverin', while tha heerd tha pyewipe screech 'cross tha swamp; 'twor tha au'd Mun's holla! An' i' tha morn, sure 'nough, tha watter ud be doun, an' tha pads dry. Tiddy Mun a done tha job for un.

What's that? Ay' a called 'un Tiddy Mun, for a wor none bigger 'n a three year's bairn, but a hadn't rightly no sort of a name—a niver had none. Someday a'll tell thee how that comed.

So's a wor sayin'. Tiddy Mun dwelt i' tha watter-holes, an' noo tha Duchies wor a emptyin' 'em out, while a wor dry as a two year au'd Mother in cake—an' thou'll no take much o' that. Hast heard tha au'd rhyme, as says,

> 'Tiddy Mun, wi'out a name,
> White he'ad, walkin' lame;
> While the watter teems tha fen
> Tiddy Mun'll harm nane.'

An' this wor tha pother! For tha watter-holes wor most dry, an' tha watter wor drawd off into big dykes, so that tha soppy, quiverin' bog wor turnin' in firm molds, an' wheer'd Tiddy Mun be than? Iverybody said, as ill times wor comin' for tha Cars.

But, however, tha wor no help for't; tha Duchies delved, an' tha Duchies drawd tha watter off, an' tha dykes gotten ever langer an' langer, an' deeper an' deeper; tha watter runned away, an' runned away down to tha river, an' tha black soft bog-lands 'ud soon be turned to green closin's.

But thoff tha work gotten done, it wor no'on wi'out trouble. At the Inn o' nights, on tha great settle, an' i' tha garths, an' i' tha kitchens to home, tha lispit strange an' queer tales, ay dearie me, stra-ange an' queer, but true's death! An' tha au'd folk wagged ther heads, an' tha young uns wagged ther tongues, an' tha anes thowt, an' tha ithers said,

'Ay, an' for sure, it's ill comes o' crossin' Tiddy Mun! '

For mark ma words! 'Twar first ane, syne anither o' tha Duchies wor gone, clean sperrited away! Not a

sight o'un anywheres! Tha sowt for un, an' sowt for un, but no'on a shadow of un wor iver seen more, an' tha Car-folk kenned fine, that a'd niver find un, nay, not if a sowt till tha gowden Beasts o' Judgement come a-roarin' an' a-rampin' ower tha land, for to fett tha sinners.

Tiddy Mun a'd fetted un away, an' drooned un i' tha mud holes, wheer tha hadn't drawed off all tha watter!

An' tha Car-folk nodded an' said,

'Ay, that comed o' crossin' Tiddy Mun.'

But tha browt more Duchies for tha work, an' thoff Tiddy Mun fetted un, an' fetted un, tha work gotten on natheless an' tha wor no help for't.

An' soon tha poor Car-folk kennt that tha au'd Mun wor sore fratched wi' iverybody.

For soon a sneepit all i' turn: tha coos pined, tha pigs starved, an' tha pownies went lame; tha brats took sick, tha lambs dwined, tha creed meal brunt 'issen, an' tha new milk craddled; tha thatch fell in, an' tha walls burst out, an' all an' anders went arsy-varsy.

At first tha Car-folk couldna think 'at tha au'd Mun 'ud worrit 's ain people sich an' away; an' a thought mayhap 'twor tha witches or tha todlowries, as done it. So tha lads stoned tha wall-eyed witch up to Gorby out o' tha Market-Place, an' Sally to Wadham wi' tha Evil Eye, she as charmed the dead men out o' ther graves, i' tha kirk garths; tha ducked she in tha horse-pond while a wor most dead; an' tha all said 'our father' back'ards an' spat to the east to keep tha todlowries' pranks off; but 'twor no'on helping; for Tiddy Mun 'isself wor angered, an' a wor visitin' it on 's poor Car-folks. An' what could tha do?

The bairns sickened i' ther mothers' airms; an' ther poor white faces niver brightened oop; an' tha feythers sat an' smoked, while tha mothers grat, ower tha tiddy innocent babbies lyin' theer so white an' smilin' an' peaceful. 'Twor like a frost 'at comes an' kills the bonniest flowers. But tha hearts wor sore, an' ther stomachs empty, wi' all this sickness an' bad harvest an' what not; an' somethin' mun be done, or the Car-folk 'ud be a'deed an' gone.

Endlins, some 'un minded how, whan tha watters

rose i' tha marshes, afore tha delvin'; an' tha folk ca'ed out to Tiddy Mun, come New Moon i' tha darklins; a heerd un an' did as a wor axed. An' tha thowt, mappen if tha ca'd un age'an, so's to show un like, as tha Car-folk wished un well, an' that a'd give un tha watter back if tha only could—maybe a'd take tha bad spell undone, and forgive 'un again.

So tha fixed 'at tha should a' meet togither come tha next New Moon doun by tha cross dyke, each one wi' a stoup o' watter, nigh on to John Ratton's garth.

Weel, 'twor a reg'lar gath'rin', there wor au'd Tom o' tha Hatch an' Willem, his sister's son, from Priestrigg; an' crooked Fred Lidgitt, an' Brock o' Hell-gate, an' Ted Badley, as wor feyther's brothers to me; an' lots more on 'em, wi' women-folk an' bairns. A'll no say a warna theer masel, just mappen, thee knawst!

Tha comed i' threes an' fowers, joompin' at ivery sough o' wind, an' screechin' at ivery snag, but tha didn't need, for tha poor au'd Boggarts an' Jack o' Lanterns wor clean delved away. Mebbe ther's boggarts an' bogles still, an' witches an' things, a dunnot say; but they good au'd times is gone i' tha marshes, an' tha poor swamp-bogles mun flit wi' tha watter an' a seen 'em go, masel.

But, hawiver, as a wor sayin, tha comed, every one wi' a stoup o' fresh watter in 's hand; an' whiles it darkened, tha stood a'togithur, lispin' an' flusterin', keekin' i' tha shades ower tha shouthers, an' 'arkenin' oneasy-like to tha skirlin' o' tha wind, an' tha lip-lap o' tha rinnin' watter.

Come the darklins at long last, an' tha stood all on 'em at tha dyke-edge, an' lookin ower to tha new River, tha ca'd out a'togither, stra-ange an' loud,

> 'Tiddy Mun, wi'out a name,
> Here's watter for thee, tak' tha spell undone! '

an' tha teemed tha watter out o' tha stoups in tha dyke splash sploppert!

'Twor geyan skeerful, stannin' holdin' on togither, i' tha stillness. Tha 'arkened wi' all ther might, to hear if Tiddy Mun answered 'em; but ther wor nothing but

on-natral stillness. An' then, just whan tha thowt 'twor no'on good, ther broke out tha awfullest wailin' an' whimperin' all round about 'em; it comed back'ards an' for'ards, for all tha world like a lot o' little cryin' babbies greetin' as if to break ther hearts, an' none to comfort 'em: a sobbed an' sobbed thersels most quiet, an' then began again louder 'n ever, wailin' an moanin' till a made uns heart ache to hear 'em.

An' all towanst the mothers cried out as 'twor ther dead bairns, callin' on Tiddy Mun to tak tha spell undone, an' let tha childer live an' grow strong; an' tha pore innocents, fleein' above us i' tha darklins, moaned an' whimpered soft-like, as if thea kenned ther mothers' voices an' wor tryin' to reach ther bosom. An' tha wor women as said 'at tiddy hands 'ad touched 'em, an' cold lips kissed 'em, an' soft wings fluttered round 'em that night, as tha stood waitin' an' arkenin' to tha woful greetin'.

Then all at once, tha wor stillness agean, an' tha could hear tha watter lappin' at ther feet, an' tha dog ye'ppin' i' tha garth. But then comed soft an' fond-like from tha river hissen, th' aud pyewipe screech, once an' again a comed, an' fortrue, 'twor tha aud man's holler. An' tha kenned a'd tak tha spell undone, for 'twor so kind an' broodlin' an' sorry-like as never was.

Ay dearie day! How tha laughed an' grat together, runnin' an' jumpin' about, like a pack o' brats comin' out o' school, as tha set off home, wi' light hearts, an' never a thought on tha boggarts. Only tha mothers thought o' ther dead babies an' ther arms felt empty an' ther hearts lonesome an' wearyin' for tha cold kiss an' tha flutterin' o' tha tiddy fingers, an' tha grat wi' thinkin' on ther poor wee bodies, driftin' aboot i' tha soughin' o' tha night win'.

But fro' that day, mark ma words! 'twor strange an' thrivin' i' tha Cars. Tha sick bairns gotten well, an' tha cattle throve, an' tha bacon-pigs fattened, tha men folk addled good wages, an' bread wor plenty; fur Tiddy Mun had taken tha bad spell undone. But every New Moon as was, out tha went in tha darklins, to tha gainest dyke-edge, feyther an' mither an' brats; an' tha teemed tha watter i' tha dyke, cryin',

'Tiddy Mun wi'out a name
Here's watter for thee.'

An' tha pyewipe screech'ud come back, soft and tender an' pleased. But for certain-sure, if wan o' un didna go out, c'ep a wor sick, Tiddy Mun missed un, an wor angered wi' un, an' laid tha spell on 'un 'arder nor ever; while a went wi' tha others, come next New Moon, to ax tha spell undone. An' whan tha bairns wor bad, a tellt un as Tiddy Mun 'ud fett 'em away; an' a wor good as gold to once, for tha kenned as a'd do it.

But thae days is gone by, an' folk now ken nowt about un. Ay, faix, is it true for a' that; a've seen un mysel, limpin' by i' tha fog, all grey an' white an' screechin' like tha pyewipe, but 'tis lang syne a's ben by, an' a've teemed tha watter out o' tha stoup too, but a'm too aud now, thou seest, an' a cannot walk, since years gone. But a guess Tiddy Mun's bin frighted away wi' a' tha new ways an' gear, for folk dinna ken un no more, an' a niver hear say now, as we used to say when a wor young, an' annybody had a mort o' trouble an' mischance, an' wry luck, us said,

'Ah, thou arnt bin out i' tha New Moon lately, an' for certain-sure, it's ill to cross Tiddy Mun wi'out a name! '

The North East

THE HEDLEY KOW

THE people of the neighbourhood of Hedley, on the skirts of Blackburn Fell, west of Ravensworth, on the road to Tanfield, were frequently annoyed, during the last century, by the pranks of a boggle of the name of Hedley Kow. He belonged to a family of goblins more mischievous than cruel. He did nobody any serious harm, but took delight in frightening them. To whomsoever he appeared he usually ended his cantrips with a hoarse laugh at their fear or astonishment after he had played them some sorry trick.

That illy-willy Kow was a perfect plague to the servant girls at farm houses all round the Fell. Sometimes he would call them out of their beds by imitating the voice of their lovers at the window. At other times during their absence he would overturn the kail, open the milk-house door, and invite the cat to lap the cream, let down steeks in the stockings they had been knitting, or put their spinning wheel out of order.

Many a time, taking the shape of a favourite cow, he would lead the milk-maid a long chase round the field before he would allow himself to be caught, and after kicking and rowting during the whole milking time, 'as if the deil was in Hawkie', he would at last upset the pail, and, slipping clear of the tie, give a loud

bellow and bolt off tail on end, thus letting the girl know she had been the sport of the Kow. This trick of his was so common that he seems to have got his name from it, though to tell him from a real cow, folk called him Kow or Koo. Here is a story about this Hedley Kow.

There was once an old woman, Goody Blake, who lived in a little bit of a cottage and earned a scant living by running errands for her neighbours; she got a bite here, a sup there, making shift to get on somehow. She always looked as spry and cheery as if she had not a want in the world.

Now one summer evening, as she was trotting, full of smiles as ever, along the high road to her hovel, what should she see but a big black pot lying in the ditch.

'Goodness me! ' cried Goody, 'that would be just the very thing for me if I only had something to put in it. But I haven't. Now who could have left it in the ditch?'

And she looked about her expecting the owner would not be far off; but she could see nobody.

'Maybe there's a hole in it,' Goody went on, 'and that's why it has been cast away. But it would do fine to put a flower in for my window; so I'll just take it home with me.'

And with that she lifted the lid and looked inside.

'Mercy me! ' she cried, fair amazed. 'If it isn't full of gold pieces. Here's luck! '

And so it was, brimful of great gold coins. Well, at first she simply stood stock-still, wondering if she was standing on her head or her heels. Then she began saying,

'Lawks! But I do feel rich. I feel awful rich.'

After she had said this many times, she began to wonder how she was to get her treasure home. It was too heavy for her to carry, and she could see no better way than to tie the end of her shawl to it and drag it behind her like a go-cart.

'It will soon be dark,' Goody said to herself as she trotted along. 'So much the better. The neighbours will not see what I'm bringing home, and I shall have all the

night to myself, and be able to think what I'll do. Mayhap I'll buy a grand house and just sit by the fire with a cup o' tea and do not work at all like a queen. Or maybe I'll bury it at the garden foot and just keep a bit in the old china teapot on the chimney-piece. Or maybe—Goody! Goody! I feel that grand I don't know myself.'

By this time she was a bit tired of dragging such a heavy weight, and, stopping to rest a while, turned to look at her treasure.

And lo! It wasn't a pot of gold at all! It was nothing but a lump of silver.

She stared at it, and rubbed her eyes, and stared at it again.

'Well I never! ' she said at last. 'And me thinking it was a pot of gold. I must have been dreaming. But this is luck! Silver is far less trouble—easier to mind, and not so easy stolen. Them gold pieces would have been the death o' me, and with this great lump of silver...'

So she went off again planning what she would do, and feeling as rich as rich, until becoming a bit tired again she stopped to rest and gave a look round to see if her treasure was safe; and she saw nothing but a great lump of iron!

'Well I never! ' says Goody again. 'And I mistaking it for silver! I must have been dreaming. But this is luck. It's real convenient. I can get penny pieces for old iron, and penny pieces are a deal handier for me than your gold and silver. Why, I should never have slept a wink for fear of being robbed. But a penny piece comes in useful, and I shall sell that iron for a lot and be real rich—rolling rich.'

So on she trotted full of plans as to how she would spend her penny pieces, till once more she stopped to rest and looked round to see her treasure was safe. And this time she saw nothing but a big stone.

'Well I never! ' she cried, full of smiles. 'And to think I mistook it for iron. I must have been dreaming. But here's luck indeed, and me wanting a stone terrible bad to stick open the gate. Eh my! But it's a change for the better. It's a fine thing to have good luck.'

So, all in a hurry to see how the stone would keep the gate open, she trotted off down the hill till she came to her own cottage. She unlatched the gate and then turned to unfasten her shawl from the stone which lay on the path behind her. Aye! It was a stone sure enough. There was plenty light to see it lying there, douce and peaceable as a stone should.

So she bent over it to unfasten the shawl end, when—

'Oh my! '

All of a sudden it gave a jump, a squeal, and in one moment was as big as a haystack. Then it let down four great lanky legs and threw out two long ears, flourished a great long tail and romped off, kicking and squealing and whinnying and laughing like a naughty, mischievous boy!

The old woman stared after it till it was fairly out of sight, then she burst out laughing too.

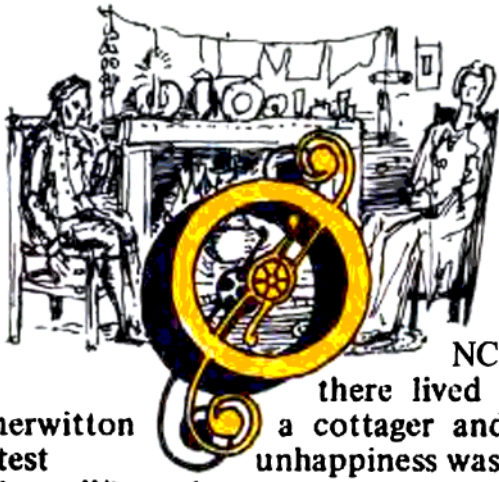
'Well,' she chuckled, 'I am in luck! Quite the luckiest body hereabouts. Fancy my seeing the Hedley Kow all to myself; and making myself so free with it too! My goodness, I do feel that GRAND...'

And Goody Blake went into her cottage and spent the evening chuckling over her good luck.

* * *

Whenever the cat o' the house is black,
The lasses o' lovers will have no lack.
Kiss the black cat,
An' 'twill make ye fat;
Kiss the white ane,
'Twill make ye lean.

THE MAGIC OINTMENT



ONCE upon a time there lived in the village of Netherwitton a cottager and his wife whose greatest unhappiness was that they had no children. When the cottager was working in June on the lonely hillsides, cutting the peats, he often used to look down into the valley and see the boys diving and swimming in the river, and wish that one of them was his boy. And when the long winter nights came, he would sit carving a new shepherd's crook for himself, and think to himself,

'Oh, if only we had a little boy to play here on the floor in front of the fire. I would carve him a crook too, and he would go to the hill with me when the days were fine. I would show him where the golden plover nests, and teach him to fish for the trout with me.'

And as his wife was sitting by him knitting, she too was thinking,

'I could teach him the fine stories of our country, and sing our songs to him.'

But they had no child. Each night they sadly turned down the lamp, and sadly went to bed, and listened to the wind outside.

On one of these nights, when the cottager had finished his carving and his wife had finished her knitting, they had supper and were just about to turn down the lamp, when there came a knock at the door. The husband went to the door, wondering what could be bringing visitors to the house at that time of night. He opened it and said,

'Come in, strangers.'

And in walked three people—a man, a woman, and a little boy. They were dressed like ordinary people, but the man was as handsome as a king, and the lady looked as beautiful as a queen, and the little boy was as fine as a prince. But princes or paupers, the cottager and his wife made them welcome.

'Will you have supper, strangers?' asked the wife.

'No, thank you,' replied the man; 'we have come to ask you a greater favour than that.'

'If we can grant it, Sir, we will,' said the cottager.

'My wife and I have travelled very far tonight, and we must travel even farther. We must leave the land for some time. We have heard that you have no children, and have come to ask you if you will take care of our boy till we return from over the sea. We will pay you well. Will you take him?'

'Ay, Sir, that we will,' replied the cottager. 'And as for your money, we shall need none of that. It is payment enough for us to have this little boy to love.'

'He is a good boy and will be grateful to you, and obey you, and grow strong if you will do one thing. Every night you must anoint his eyes with this ointment. But beware that you do not use it for yourself or harm may come to you.'

And he took from under his coat a curiously carved and painted ointment jar. Then father and mother kissed their boy, and went out again into the night.

That night the child slept in the little attic which the cottager and his wife had always kept clean and tidy, and the next morning he was ready to go out with his new father.

From then on the cottager and his wife lived a new life. Every day the boy went to the hill with his foster-father, who taught him to mind the ewes and the lambs. They made sticks and rattles out of the bulrushes. They climbed the hills and gathered cloudberries and blaeberries. The boy watched the chickens hatching out, and the swallows building in the big barn where the hay was. Or if the nights were dark and wet, he played games with his father, and his mother told him stories of all the lords and ladies and giants in the

land, and sang him the sweet songs of the North Country. Many a time the roof echoed to the sound of,

Ca' Hawkie, ca' Hawkie,
Ca' Hawkie through the watter,
Hawkie is a sweir beast,
And Hawkie widna wade the watter.

And the cottager would dandle the little lad on his knee, singing a little song as he bounced him up and down,

Dance to your daddie,
My bonnie laddie,
Dance to your daddie, my bonnie lamb!
And ye'll get a fishie
In a little dishie–
Ye'll get a fishie when the booat cems hame!

Dance to your daddie,
My bonnie laddie,
Dance to your daddie, my bonnie lamb!
And ye'll get a cooatie,
And a pair o' breekies–
Ye'll get a whippie and a supple Tam!

And every night before bedtime they anointed the boy's eyes with the strange-smelling ointment that the stranger had given them. And when they had dealt thus with the boy's eyes, the wife would sing another song,

Wrap up, rowl up, rowl up the feetie on't,
Wrap up, rowl up, rowl up the feetie on't,
We never knew we had a bairnie
Til we heard the greetin' on't.

Red-lipped, rosy-cheeked, just like the mother on't,
Black-haired, knock-kneed, just like the father on't,
We never knew we had a bairnie
Til we heard the greetin' on't.

And many's the night, when his wife was sleeping, the cottager pondered on the ointment. It was magical, for no matter how much was used the jar was never empty, and its virtue was so great that the boy was never sick or cross or unhappy. Many a time the man stretched out his hand to spread a little on his own eyes, but every time he remembered the stranger's warning, and held back his hand..

One night, however, the temptation was too great for him. It was the night before the great fair at Longhorsley, to which he was taking his wife and the boy. They had gone to bed and he was alone in the kitchen polishing his best shoes which he was to wear the next day.

'Surely,' he said, 'a little of this wonderful ointment will not harm me.'

Alas, if he had only known that the stranger who had come to his house that night had been no mortal at all, but the King of the Bad Fairies, he would not have used the ointment. But in his ignorance his curiosity was too strong to resist, and he reached out his hand and smeared a little of the ointment on one eye.

Nothing happened. He felt neither worse nor better.

'Perhaps,' he thought to himself, 'this is only some salve to preserve the boy's eyesight, which may be weak.'

So he went to bed and slept soundly.

Nor did he feel any ill effects the next day. They all rose early and walked the five miles into the village of Longhorsley. There all the stalls were set out. There were fine horses on show, and cattle and sheep and dogs, and all the animals that the North Country shepherds and farmers kept. And on the stalls were displayed butter and cheeses and bread and tea-cakes, flowers, rugs, sticks and garments. All these the cottager and his wife had seen before, but they had never enjoyed themselves so much. Their new-found boy was never tired of admiring the stallions in their stalls, or watching the sword-dancers stamping and turning, or listening to the pipers.

But suddenly the cottager saw, near a stall on which

were spread butter and cheeses, the stranger who had brought the boy to them.

'Look, wife,' he cried. 'Look, there is the stranger! '

'Where?' asked his wife.

'There, there, by the butter stall.'

'But I cannot see him.'

'Yes, yes, there he is—and the lady too! '

'Nonsense, husband! You must be dreaming. Let us go and see the wrestling.'

'No, wife, I tell you I can see them—and they are stealing the butter and the cheeses! '

'But I cannot see them.'

'But I can. I must go to them and tell them.'

And he strode away to where the King of the Bad Fairies and his wife, invisible to all except the cottager, were stealing the butter and the cheeses.

'Sir,' said the cottager. 'Stop! You are thieving.'

The King of the Bad Fairies turned round quickly.

'With which eye do you see me?' he asked.

'With this one,' said the cottager, unthinkingly pointing to the eye that he had smeared with ointment.

Then the Fairy took his breath and quickly blew on the eye; and when he blew, the eye lost its sight, and he and his queen and all that they had stolen vanished.

'Wife! ' cried the cottager, running back, 'wife, I am blind in one eye. Where is the boy?'

But although they searched and searched all day, and enquired of every man and woman in the fair, they did not find the boy. He never came back to them, and the cottager could never again see with his right eye.

Scotland

THE SELKIE WIFE

FEW know the goodman of Wastness who lived alone on a small farm that stood above the sea. He dug and he sowed and he laboured all the hours of daylight to make the two ends meet; yet he remained just as poor as a corrie crisosag—a dry old beetle. He never even had time to take a wife.

'Och, there's nae enough food to bind a body to a soul,' he'd say. 'I canna manage twa o' them.'

Well, it happened one day that the goodman of Wastness was down on the ebb when he was surprised to hear snatches of song, girlish laughter and low cheery voices. The sounds seemed to be coming from the seaward side of some rocks at the far end of the shore.

The goodman crept forward and waded swiftly to the rock; the sight that met his gaze made him catch his breath in sheer astonishment. For there below him on a rocky shelf, just above the water's edge, he saw a group of young men and maidens as naked as the sunsplashed rocks. Never in all his years had he cast eyes on such lovely faces, such smooth skins and such graceful limbs.

'Selkies! That's what they are,' he murmured to himself.

He'd heard stories of the selkies or seal folk who sometimes come ashore, cast aside their seal skins and play their happy games.

'Aye, I ken who y'are,' he thought, seeing their skins upon a nearby rock. 'And what if I tak a skin for masel'?' he thought. 'It'd kep ma bed warm or be a plaid for ma back.'

So the goodman of Wastness crept down unseen, dashed across the sand and snatched up a silvery skin before any of the selkies could move.

What a to-do! Each lovely creature made a rush for the rock to seize a skin; then, diving into the sea, they swam away as fast as they were able, pulling on their seal skins as they went.

In the meantime, the goodman made good his escape with the selkie skin under one arm. Before he had left the ebb, however, he heard footsteps padding after him over the sand and the sound of a lassie softly weeping. As he turned he saw a lovely lassie holding out her hands towards him; and ever and anon she cried,

'O bonnie man, if there's ony mercy i' thee human breast, gae back me skin! I canno', canno', canno' live i' the sea without it. I canno', canno', canno' bide among me ain folk without me ain seal skin.'

The goodman's heart was moved by her sobbing pleas. Yet even more his heart was pierced by a strange sensation he had never felt before. His heart that had never loved a woman was now conquered by the beauty of the sea-lass, and he did not want to lose her.

'I dinna intend to return yon selkie skin,' he said. 'Y'll nae be awa to sea again, ma bonnie lass. Y'll stay wi' me and be ma goodwife.'

He put his plaid around the weeping sea-lass and took her by the hand, leading her to his farm. Once there he wrapped her in a blanket and gave her supper of bannock cakes and hot brose porridge. While she was eating he stole out to the barn, folded up the skin and hid it on a beam beneath the roof, where she would never find it.

Poor lassie. After her supper she lay down upon a bed and wept the whole night through. Likewise the next day too. And through the week.

But there came a time when her tears dried up and

there was nothing for it but to make the best of her new mortal life. Her goodman was fairly kind to her, if a mite unpolished in his ways. And she became a thrifty, frugal, kindly goodwife. She bore her goodman seven children, four boys and three lasses, and there were not bonnier bairns in all the isle: with large gentle brown eyes and smooth white skin.

Although she appeared fair happy, there always seemed to be a weight upon her heart, and many a sad, yearning glance did she cast towards the sea. Of an evening, when the day's work was done, she would sometimes sit upon the sandy ebb, gazing out to sea, as if searching for someone amid the waves. And she taught her bairns many a strange and doleful song that touched the heart of all who chanced to catch their music on the wind.

Now it chanced one time, when the goodman of Wastness had taken his sons fishing in his boat and the goodwife had sent two lassies to the ebb to gather limpets and wilks, that the selkie wife and the youngest lass were sitting alone at home. No sooner had her goodman and the children left the house than the selkie wife was in and out of the cupboards, feeling all along the shelves, peering under beds and tables, rummaging in all the chests and boxes, sighing all the while.

'Whist, Mam,' her little lassie said, 'what is it that ye're seekin'?'

'Och, ma peerie bairn,' her mother said, 'I'm leukan for a bonnie selkie skin your father once brought hame.'

'Wad it be soft and silvery wi' bonnie bruin spots?' the lassie asked.

'Aye, ma bonnie bairn, that it wad! D'ye ken where t'is?' her mother cried excitedly.

Says the lass,

'Maybe I ken whar it is. Aen day whin ye were a' oot, an' Ded thought I was sleepan i' the bed, he took a bonnie skin doon; he glowred at it a peerie minute, then laid it upon the beam in our old stane barn.'

The lassie had hardly finished speaking when her mother rushed from the house towards the old stone

barn. In an instant she was standing on a box, feeling with trembling hands along the beams. At last, as her dusty fingers edged along a beam they touched something soft—her selkie skin! Pulling it down, she clasped it lovingly to her breast and ran back with it to the house.

'Fare ye well, ma peerie buddo,' said she to the lass. 'I must awa to ma ain hame.'

She ran across the heather to the cliff, hurried down the cliff path to the sea, pulled on her long-lost skin and, with a last wave to her daughters on the ebb, she plunged into the sea.

When she was already far out to sea, she saw the fishing boat with her husband and her four sons. For several moments she swam alongside as if trying to tell them something. They were puzzled by the friendly seal that swam so close, its head lifted above the waves, looking at them with its lovely gentle eyes shining with a gleam that mingled joy with sadness.

All of a sudden, with a painful cry of recognition, the goodman of Wastness snatched up his net and went to cast it in the water.

But it was too late. The seal had dived under the waves and was soon far, far away, swimming out to sea. And beside her there swam a selkie man, crying with delight. As the goodman stared he heard a faint cry across the waves,

> 'Goodman of Wastness, farewell to ye.
> I liked ye well, ye were good to me.
> But I love better my man of the sea.'

And that was the last he ever saw of his selkie wife.

Yet every now and then, in the mouth of the night, he heard the faint sound of singing on the wind; and these were the words the voices sang,

> Cha chum tigh fiodh fiodha sinn,
> Cha chum tigh fiodh sinn,
> Cha chum tigh bhan na slatan ruinn.
> Cha chum tigh Bhreatunn ruinn.

The wood-wooden houses won't keep us,
The houses of wood won't keep us;
The white slatted houses won't hold us,
The house of Britain won't confine us.

THE WEE BUNNOCK

'GRANNIE, grannie, come tell us the story o' the wee bunnock.' 'Hout, bairns, ye've heard it a hunner times afore. I needna tell it owre again.' 'Ah, but, grannie, it's sic a fine ane. Ye maun tell't. Just ance.'

'Weel, weel, bairns, if ye'll a' promise to be guid, I'll tell ye't again.' Some tell about their sweethearts, how they tirled them to the winnock. But I'll tell you a bonny tale about a guid aitmeal bunnock.

* * *

There lived an auld man and an auld wife at the side o' a burn. They had twa key, five hens and a cock, a cat and twa kittlins. The auld man lookit after the kye, and the auld wife span on the tow-rock. The kittlins aft grippit at the auld wife's spindle, as it tussled owre the hearth-stane. 'Sho, sho,' she wad say, 'gae wa! ' And so it tussled about.

Ae day, after parritch time, she thought she wad hae a bunnock. Sae she bakit twa aitmeal bunnocks, and set them to the fire to harden. After a while, the auld man came in, and sat down aside the fire, and takes ane o' the bunnocks, and snappit it through the middle. When the tither ane sees this, it rins aff as fast as it could, and the auld wife after't, wi' the spindle in the tae hand and the tow-rock in the tither.

But the wee bunnock was awa', and out o' sight, and ran till it came to a guid muckle thack house, and ben it ran boldly to the fireside; and there were three tailors sitting on a muckle table. When they saw the wee bunnock come ben, they jumpit up, and gat in ahint the goodwife, that was cardin' tow ayont the fire.

'Hout,' quo' she, 'be na afeard; it's but a wee bunnock. Grip it, and I'll gie ye a soup milk till't.'

Up she gets wi' the tow-cards, and the tailor wi' the goose, and the twa prentices, the ane wi' the muckle shears, and the tither wi' the lawbrod. But it jinkit them, and ran round about the fire; and ane o' the prentices, thinking to snap it wi' the shears, fell i' the ash-pit. The tailor dropt the goose, and the goodwife the tow-cards; but a' wadna do.

But the bunnock cried,

> 'I fore-ran
> A wee wee wife and a wee wee man;
> A wee wee pot and a wee wee pan;
> And sae will I you an I can.'

And it ran awa', and ran till it came to a wee house at the roadside; and in it rins, and there was a weaver sittin' on the loom, and the wife winnin' a clue o' yarn.

'Tibby,' quo' he, 'what's tat?'

'Oh,' quo' she, 'it's a wee bunnock.'

'It's weel come,' quo' he, 'for our sowens were but thin the day. Grip it, my woman; grip it.'

'Ay,' quo' she. 'That's a clever bunnock. Kep, Willie, kep, man.'

'Hout,' quo' Willie, 'cast the clue at it.'

But the bunnock whipit round about, and but the floor, cryin' out,

'I fore-ran
A wee wee wife and a wee wee man;
A wee wee pot and a wee wee pan;
Twa prentices and a tailor man;
And sae will I you an I can.'

And aff it gaed, and awre the knoll, like a new-tarred sheep or a daft yell cow. And it runs to the niest house, and ben to the fireside; and there was a good-wife churnin'.

'Come awa', wee bunnock,' quo' she. 'I'se hae cream and bread the day.'

But the wee bunnock whipit round about the churn, and the wife after't, and i' the hurry she had near-hand overturned the churn. And afore she got it set right again, the wee bunnock was aff, callin' as it ran down the brae to the mill,

'I fore-ran
A wee wee wife and a wee wee man;
A wee wee pot and a wee wee pan;
Twa prentices and a tailor man;
A weaver and a wife wi' yarn;
And sae will I you an I can.'

And in it ran to the mill.

The miller was siftin' meal i' the trough, but looking up he says,

'Ay,' quo' he, 'it's a sign o' plenty when ye're rinnin' about, and naebody to look after ye. But I like a bunnock and cheese. Come your wa's ben, and I'll gie ye a night's quarters.'

But the bunnock wadna trust itsel' wi' the miller and his cheese. Sae it turned and ran its wa's out, cryin' back,

'I fore-ran
A wee wee wife and a wee wee man;
A wee wee pot and a wee wee pan;

Twa prentices and a tailor man;
A weaver and a wife wi' yarn;
A goodwife churnin' cream;
And sae will I you an I can.'

So it toddled awa', and ran till it came to the niest house, and in, and ben to the fireside. The folk were just sittin' down to their sowens, and the goodwife scartin' the pat.

'Ho, Jock,' quo' the goodwife, 'there's a wee bunnock come in to warm itsel' at our fireside.'

'Steek the door,' quo' the goodman, 'and we'll try to get a grip o't.'

When the bunnock heard that, it ran out the house, and they after't wi' their spunes, and the goodman cast his bunnat. But it whirlt awa', and ran, and better ran, callin' out,

'I fore-ran
A wee wee wife and a wee wee man;
A wee wee pot and a wee wee pan;
Twa prentices and a tailor man;
A weaver and a wife wi' yarn;
A goodwife churnin' cream;
A miller siftin' meal;
And sae will I you an I can.'

It ran and ran, till it came to another house; and when it gaed ben, the folk were just gaun to their beds. The goodman was castin' aff his breeks, and the goodwife rakin' the fire.

'What's tat?' quo' he.

'Losh,' quo' she, 'it's a wee bunnock.'

Quo' he, 'I could eat the hauf o't, for a' the brose I hae suppit.'

'Grip it,' quo' the wife, 'and I'll hae a bit too.'

'Cast your breeks at it—kep—kep! '

The goodman cast the breeks, and had near-hand smoor't it. But it warsl't out, and ran, and the goodman after't, wanting the breeks; and there was a clean chase owre the craft part, and up the wunyerd, and in

amang the whins; and the goodman lost, and had to come his wa's trottin' hame hauf-nakit. But he could hear the bunnock singin',

'I fore-ran
A wee wee wife and a wee wee man;
A wee wee pot and a wee wee pan;
Twa prentices and a tailor man;
A weaver and a wife wi' yarn;
A goodwife churnin' cream;
A miller siftin' meal;
Twa braw folk eatin' sowens;
And sae will I you an I can.'

But now it was grown dark, and the wee bunnock couldna see; but it gaed into the side o' a muckle whin bush, and into a fox's hole. The fox had gotten nae meat for twa days.

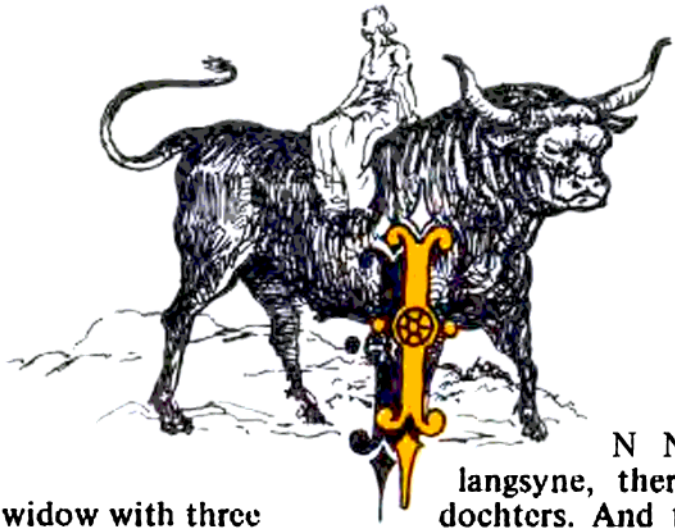
'O welcome, welcome,' quo' the fox, and snappit it in twa i' the middle. And that was the end o' the wee bunnock.

Now, be ye lords or commoners,
Ye needna laugh nor sneer,
For ye'll be a' i' the tod's hole
In less than a hunner year.

* * *

'Now, weans, an ye live to grow muckle, be na owre lifted up about onything, nor owre sair cuisten down; for ye see the folk were a' cheated, and the puir fox got the bunnock.'

THE BLACK BULL OF NORROWAY



IN Norroway langsyne, there lived a widow with three dochters. And they were very poor with scarce enough to bind a body to a soul. One day the auldest o' them said to her mither,

'Mither, bake me a bannock, and roast me a collop, for I'm gaun awa' to spotch my fortune.'

Her mither did sae; and the dochter gaed awa' to an auld witch washerwife and telled her purpose.

'Good day t'ye, ma bonny lass,' the witch washerwife said. 'What will ye be wanting o' me?'

'I wish to spotch my fortune,' said the lass.

The auld wife bade her stay that day, and gang and look out o' her back-door, and see what she could see. She saw nocht the first day. The second day she did the same, and saw nocht. On the third day she looked again, and saw a coach-and-six coming alang the road. She ran in and telled the auld wife what she saw.

'Aweel,' quo' the auld wife, 'yon's for you.'

Sae they took her into the coach, and galloped aff.

By and by, the second dochter says to her mither,

'Mither, bake me a bannock, and roast me a collop, for I'm gaun awa' to spotch my fortune.'

Her mither did sae; and awa' she gaed to the auld wife, as her sister had dune.

'I wish to spotch my fortune,' she told the canny wife.

The auld wife made her welcome,

'Bide aweel, my bonny lass, and ye'll see your fortune soon enough.'

The same tale unfolded as before. She saw nocht the first day or the next; but on the third she looked out o' the back-door, and saw a coach-and-four coming alang the road.

'Aweel,' quo' the auld wife, 'yon's for you.'

Sae they took her in, and aff they set.

Meanwhile, in the widow's hame, the third dochter says to her mither,

'Mither, bake me a bannock, and roast me a collop, for I'm gaun awa' to spotch my fortune.'

Her mither did sae; and awa' she gaed to the auld witch wife.

'Ye'll see your fortune down the passage and through the kitchen door,' the witch wife said. 'There ye'll see what is to be.'

She did sae; and when she came back, said she saw nocht. The second day she did the same, and saw nocht. The third day she looked again, and on coming back, said to the auld wife she saw nocht but a muckle Black Bull coming crooning alang the road.

'Aweel,' quo' the auld wife, 'yon's for you.'

Aye she wept, and loud she wept. But what is to be will be. She was lifted up and set upon his back, and awa' they went.

Aye they travelled, and on they travelled, till the lady grew faint wi' hunger.

'Eat out o' my right lug,' says the Black Bull, 'and drink out o' my left lug, and set by your leavings.'

Sae she did as he said, and was wonderfully refreshed.

And lang they gaed, and sair they rade, till they came in sight o' a very big and bonny castle.

'Yonder we maun be this night,' quo' the bull; 'for my auld brither lives yonder.'

And presently they were at the place. They lifted her aff his back, and took her in, and sent him away to a field to graze. How surprised the lassie was to find her eldest sister living there with the castle laird; they talked lang into the night.

In the morning, when they brought the bull hame, her sister gave her a rosy apple.

'Ye're no' to break it,' says her sister, 'till ye are in the greatest strait ever mortal was in; this will bring ye out o't.'

Thereupon, she was lifted on the bull's back and aff they set once more.

Far they journeyed, farther aye than I can tell, till the lass was faint wi' hunger. Again the Black Bull guessed her thoughts, and kindly says,

'Eat out o' my right lug, and drink out o' my left lug, and set by your leavings.'

Sae she did as he said, and was wonderfully refreshed. And they travelled on and came in sight o' a far bonnier castle, and far farther awa' than the last. Says the bull till her,

'Yonder we maun be the night, for my second brither lives yonder.'

And they were at the place directly. They lifted her down and took her in, and sent the bull to the field for the night. How glad the lassie was to find her second sister waiting within. The night passed in happy chatter with her sister; then in the morning she was taken into a fine rich room and given the finest pear she had ever seen.

'Ye're no' to break it,' says her sister, 'till ye are in the greatest strait ever mortal could be in; the pear will get ye out o't.'

Again she was lifted and set on the bull's broad back, and awa' they went.

And lang they rade, and sair they rade, till they came in sight o' the far biggest castle, and far farthest aff, they had yet seen.

'We maun be yonder the night,' says the bull, 'for it is my hame.'

And they were there directly. They lifted her down, took her in, and sent the bull to the field for the night. In the morning they took her into a room, the finest of a', and gied her a plum, telling her no' to break it till she was in the greatest strait a mortal could be in, and that wad get her out o't.

Presently they brought hame the bull, set the lady

on his back, and awa' they went.

And aye they rade, and on they rade, till they came to a dark and ugsome glen, where they stopped, and the lady lighted down.

Says the bull to her,

'Here ye maun stay till I gang and fight the Etin. Ye maun seat yoursel' on that stane, and move neither hand nor fit till I come back, else I'll never find ye again. And if all about ye turns to blue, ye'll ken that I hae won; but should a' things turn to red, he'll hae conquered me.'

As the Black Bull vanished through the glen, the lassie set hersel' down on the stane, and by and by a' round her turned to blue. O'ercome wi' joy, she lifted her fit and crossed it owre the ither, sae glad was she that he had won.

Alas, by moving her fit, she had broken her vow.

Sae it was, when the Bull returned, he could no' find her, nor she him.

Lang she sat, and aye she grat, till she wearied of waiting. At last she rase and gaed awa', she kendna whaur till. On she wandered, past loch and burn, till she came to a great hill o' glass. Every time she tried a' she could to climb, she wasna able.

Sae at last round the bottom o' the hill she gaed, sabbing and seeking a passage awre, till at last she came to a smith's house, where an auld man plied the bellows.

The smith promised, if she wad serve him seven years, he wad make her airn shoon, wherewi' she could climb owre the glassy hill.

And serve him she did full seven years.

At seven years' end she got her airn shoon, clamb the glassy hill, and chanced to come to the auld witch washerwife's habitation. The auld wife was bending owre a washtub and scrubbing some bluidy sarks. The lassie asked if she might bide the night.

'If ye can wash the bluid-stains from this sark, ye can bide aweel,' the auld wife says.

In truth, a gallant young knight, the Prince of Norroway, had given in some bluidy sarks to wash, and whaever washed thae sarks was to be his wife. The auld

wife had washed till she was tired, and then she set to her dochter, and baith washed, and they washed, and they better washed, in hopes of getting the young knight; but a' they could do, they couldna bring out a stain.

Sae now they set the stranger lassie to wark; and whenever she began, the stains came out pure and clean, and the auld wife made the knight believe it was her dochter had washed the sarks.

So the knight and the eldest dochter were to be married, and the stranger lassie's eyes filled with tears when she heard the news. For she guessed that the knight was her Black Bull, whom she had betrayed.

What could she do?

It was then that she bethought her of her apple and, breaking it in two, she found it filled with grains of gold, the richest ever seen.

At once she showed them to the dochter, saying, 'All these I will give you, if you put off your marriage for ae day, and allow me to go to the Prince's room tonight.'

The dochter consented; but meanwhile the auld wife had prepared a sleeping drink, and given it to the knight, wha drank it, and never wakened till next morning.

The lee-lang night the lassie sabbed and sang,

> 'Seven lang years I served for thee,
> The glassy hill I clamb for thee,
> The bluidy sark I wrang for thee;
> And wilt thou no' wauken and turn to me?'

But the knight didna hear.

Next day she kentna what to do for grief. But then she recalled the pear. At once she brak the pear, and fan't filled wi' pearls, far richer than the grains of gold. Wi' these she bargained with the dochter to stay a second night in the young knight's room.

The dochter took the pearls, giving her consent.

But the auld wife gied him anither sleeping drink, and he again sleepit till morning. A' night the lassie kept sighing and singing as before,

'Seven lang years I served for thee,
The glassy hill I clamb for thee,
The bluidy sark I wrang for thee;
And wilt thou no' wauken and turn to me?'

Still he sleepit, and she nearly lost hope a'thegither.

But that day, when he was out at the hunting, somebody asked him what noise and moaning was yon they heard all last night in his bedchamber. He said he heardna ony noise. But they assured him there was sae; and he resolved to keep waking that night to try what he could hear.

That being the third night, and the lassie being between hope and despair, she brak her plum, and it held far the richest gems of the three. She bargained as before; and the auld wife, as before, took in the sleeping drink to the young knight's chamber.

But he telled her he couldna drink it that night without sweetening. And when she gaed awa' for some honey to sweeten it wi', he poured out the drink, and sae made the auld wife think he had drunk it.

They a' went to bed again, and the lassie began, as before, singing,

'Seven lang years I served for thee,
The glassy hill I clamb for thee,
The bluidy sark I wrang for thee;
And wilt thou no' wauken and turn to me?'

He heard, and turned to her.

And she telled him a' that had befa'en her, and he telled her a' that had happened to him. And he caused the auld washerwife and her dochter to be burnt.

Then the Prince of Norroway and the lassie returned to his castle and were married. And he and she are living happy till this day, for aught I ken.

'NURSE KIND AND NE'ER WANT'

'BODY kens there's fairies, but they're no sae common now as they war langsyne. Noo, weans, if ye'll be guid, I'll tell you a tale.

Lang, lang syne, a young woman of Nithsdale was singing and rocking her bairn when a wee body cam' tae the door and asked her if she could gie her a wee drap o' milk for her wean.

'Gie my bonny thing a sook,' says the Fairy.

The young woman took the bairn kindly and the Fairy instantly disappeared, saying,

'Nurse kind and ne'er want.'

Sae the young mother cared for the twa bairns. And when she wad wake up in the morning, she wad often find rich clothing for them baith and delicious food, which tasted like loaf mixed with wine and honey and kept fresh for seven days.

On the approach of summer, the Fairy came again and the wean cried with joy at the sight of her. The wee Fairy took it in her arms and, bidding the nurse follow, led the way through some scroggy woods and half way up the sunward slope of a green hill, where a door opened. They entered a porch and the door closed behind them.

The Fairy dropped three drops of dew on the nurse's left eyelid and they entered a land watered with looping rivers and yellow with corn. The nurse was given webs of fine cloth, salves for restoring mortal health and the promise of never needing.

When the Fairy dropped a green dew in her right eye she was able to see many of her lost friends reaping corn and gathering fruit. Then the Fairy passed a hand over her eye, restoring its ordinary sight, and led her back to the porch; but not before she had secured a box of the green dew.

For many years the woman had the gift of seeing earth-visiting spirits; but one day she met the Fairy from whom she had stolen the green dew, and greeted her,

'What e'e d'ye see me wi'?' whispered the Fairy.

'Wi' them baith.'

The Fairy breathed on her eyes, whereupon the power of the green dew failed, and was never restored.

* * *

The biggins were as throng as divots,
Or sparks in ony swiddie's skivets.
Waes me! The biggins I hae seen
Are maist dung doon, or far atween—

On ilk cauld hearthstone the moss graws green,
On broken beild and crumbling heap
The bracken waves, the lichins creep—
The families gaed far awa
Till Ireland and America.

THE PADDO

poor widow was one day baking bannocks, and sent her dochter wi' a dish to the well to bring water. The dochter gaed and better gaed, till she came to the well, but it was dry. Now, what to do she didna ken, for she couldna gang back to her mother without water; sae she sat down by the side o' the well, and fell a'greeting.

A Paddo then came loup-loup-louping out o' the well and asked the lassie what she was greeting for; and she said she was greeting because there was nae water in the well.

'But,' says the Paddo, 'an ye'll be my wife I'll gie ye plenty o' water.'

And the lassie, no' thinking that the poor beast could mean anything serious, said she would be his wife, for the sake o' getting the water.

So she got the water into her dish and gaed awa' hame to her mother and thought nae mair about the Paddo till that night, when, just as she and her mother were about to go to their beds, something came to the door, and when they listened they heard this sang,

> 'O open the door, my hinnie, my heart,
> O open the door, my ain true love;
> Remember the promise that you and I made,
> Down i' the meadow, where we twa met.'

Says the mother to the dochter.

'What noise is that at the door?'

'Hout,' says the dochter, 'it's naething but a filthy addo.'

'Open the door,' says her mother, 'to the poor Paddo.'

So the lassie opened the door, and the Paddo came ›up-loup-louping in, and sat down by the ingle-side. 'hen he sings,

'O gie me my supper, my hinnie, my heart,
O gie me my supper, my ain true love;
Remember the promise that you and I made,
Down i' the meadow, where we twa met.'

'Hout,' quo' the dochter, 'wad I gie a filthy Paddo ıis supper?'

'O ay,' said the mother, 'e'en gie the poor Paddo his upper.'

So the Paddo got his supper; and after that he sings gain,

'O put me to bed, my hinnie, my heart,
O put me to bed, my ain true love;
Remember the promise that you and I made,
Down i' the meadow, where we twa met.'

'Hout,' quo' the dochter, 'wad I put a filthy Paddo o bed?'

'O ay,' says her mother, 'put the poor Paddo to his ›ed.'

Then the Paddo sings again,

'Now fetch me an axe, my hinnie, my heart,
Now fetch me an axe, my ain true love;
Remember the promise that you and I made,
Down i' the meadow, where we twa met.'

The lassie wasna lang o' fetching the axe; and then he Paddo sang,

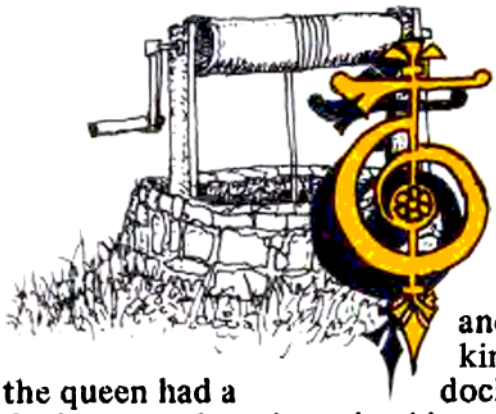
'Now chap aff my head, my hinnie, my heart,
Now chap aff my head, my ain true love;

Remember the promise that you and I made,
Down i' the meadow, where we twa met.'

Weel, the lassie chappit aff his head; and no sooner was that done than he started up the bonniest young prince that ever was seen.

And the twa lived happy a' the rest o' their days.

THE WAL AT THE WARLD'S END



THERE was once a king and a queen, and the king had a dochter and the queen had a dochter. And the king's dochter was bonnie and guid-natured, and a'body liket her; and the queen's dochter was ugly and ill-natured, and naebody liket her. The queen didna like the king's dochter, and she wanted her awa'.

Sae she sent her to the wal at the warld's end, to get a bottle o' water, thinking she would never come back.

Weel, she took her bottle, and she gaed and gaed or ere she cam to a pownie that was tethered, and the pownie said to her,

'Flit me, flit me, my bonnie May,
For I haena been flitted this seven year and a day.'

And the king's dochter said,

'Ay will I, my bonnie pownie, I'll flit ye.'

Sae the pownie ga'e her a ride owre the Muir o' Heckle-pins.

Weel, she gaed far and far and farer nor I can tell, or ere she cam to the wal at the warld's end; and when she cam to the wal, it was awfu' deep and she couldna get her bottle dippit. And as she was lookin' doon, thinkin' hoo to do, there lookit up to her three scaud men's heids, and they said to her,

'Wash me, wash me, my bonnie May,
And dry me wi' yer clean linen apron.'

And she said,

'Ay will I; I'll wash ye.'

Sae she washed the three scaud men's heids, and dried them wi' her clean linen apron; and syne they took and dippit her bottle for her.

And the scaud men's heids said, the tane to the tither,

'Weird, brither, weird, what'll ye weird?'

And the first ane said,

'I weird that if she was bonnie afore, she'll be ten times bonnier.'

And the second ane said,

'I weird that ilka time she speaks, there'll be a diamond and a ruby and a pearl drop oot o' her mouth.'

And the third ane said,

'I weird that ilka time she kaims her heid, she'll get a peck o' gowd and a peck o' siller oot o' it.'

Weel, she cam hame to the king's court again, and she was bonnie afore, she was ten times bonnier; and ilka time she opened her lips to speak there was a diamond and a ruby and a pearl drappit oot o' her mouth; and ilka time she kaimed her head, she gat a peck o' gown and a peck o' siller oot o' it.

The queen was that vexed she didna ken what to do. Sae she sent her ain dochter to see if she could fa' in wi' the same luck.

Weel, the queen's dochter gaed and gaed or ere she cam to the pownie, an' the pownie said,

'Flit me, flit me, my bonnie May,
For I haena been flitted this seven year and a day.'

And the queen's dochter said,

'Ou ye nasty beast, do ye think I'll flit ye? Do ye ken what ye're speakin' till? I'm a queen's dochter.'

Sae she wadna flit the pownie, and the pownie wadna gie her a ride ower the Muir o' Heckle-pins. And she had to gang on her bare feet, and the heckle-pins cuttit a' her feet, and she could hardly gang awa'.

Weel, she gaed far and far and farer nor I can tell, or ere she cam to the wal at the warld's end. And the wal was deep, and she couldna get her bottle dippit; and as she was lookin' doon, thinkin' hoo to do, there lookit up at her three scaud men's heids, and they said till her,

'Wash me, wash me, my bonny May,
And dry me wi' yer clean linen apron.'

And she said,

'Ou ye nasty dirty beasts, div ye think I'm gaunie wash ye? Div ye ken wha ye're speakin' till? I'm a queen's dochter.'

Sae she wadna wash them, and they wadna dip her bottle for her.

And the scaud men's heids said the tane to the tither,

'Weird, brither, weird, what'll ye weird?'

And the first ane said,

'I weird that if she was ugly afore, she'll be ten times uglier.'

And the second said,

'I weird that ilka time she speaks there'll be a puddock and a taid loup oot o' her mouth.'

And the third ane said,

'And I weird that ilka time she kaims her heid, she'll get a peck o' lice and a peck o' flechs oot o't.'

Sae she gaed awa' hame again, and if she was ugly afore she was ten times uglier; and ilka time she opened her lips a puddock and a taid oupit oot o' her mouth; and ilka time she kaimed her head she got a peck o' lice and a peck o' flechs oot o' it. Sae they had to send her awa' frae the king's court.

And there was a bonny young prince cam and married the king's dochter; and the queen's dochter had to put up wi' an auld cobbler, and he lickit her ilka day wi' a leather strap.

THE SELKIE THAT DEUD NO' FORGET

E time langshine, Mansie Meur wus pickan' limpets i' the ebb, on the wast side o' Hackness i' Sanday, whin he wus stunned tae hear some wey amang the rocks a unco' ceurious soond.

Sometimes it wus like a bothy i' terrable pain, makin' meen; an' dan it wad mak' a lood soond like the root o' a deean' coo. An' dán again de soond wad dee awa' tae a laich an' maist peetifu meen, as if it hid been a bothy i' a child-bearin' pain.

The soond wus sae awfu' peetifu', it meed Mansie think lang tae hear it. Mansie could see naethin' for a peerie while, bit a muckle selkie closs in at the rocks, rakin' his heed above the water, an leukan' wi' baith his eyes i'tae an inlet a peerie bit awa'. An' Mansie noticed that the selkie wus no f'aer'd, niver dookid, an' niver teuk his eyes aff o' that inlet.

Mansie geed ower a muckle rock 'at lay atween him an' that inlet; an' there, i' a cunyo o' the inlet, he saw a mither selkie lyan' i' a' the trouble o' her calving pains. It wus her that meed a' the sair meen an' lood yowlin'; an' the faither selkie lay i' the sea watchin' his marrow i' her trouble.

Mansie steud an' watched her teu, an' said it wus peetif' tae see what the peur dumb animal suffered.

An' there he steud, a bit aff, till sheu calved twa bonnie selkie calves, that wur nee seuner on the rock or dey grippid for de pap.

Mansie t'ought tae himsel' the calf hides wad mak' a bonnie waistco't tae him; an' he ran tae whar dey wur a' t'ree lyin'. The peur mither selkie rowed hersel' ower the face o' de rock i'tae the sea; bit her twa bairns hed no' wit tae flee. So Mansie grippid dem baith.

An' dan it wus sae winderfu' tae see the mither selkie. She teuk sae anxious for her young. Sheu rowed aboot an' aboot i' the sea, an' beat hersel' wi' her megs, like a t'ing distracted. An' dan sheu wad climmer ap we' her foremegs on de face o' de rock, an' glower'd i' Mansie's face, wi' a luck saw terrably peetifu', it wad hae melted a he'rt o' steen tae seen her.

The father selkie was ga'n the sam' wey, only he wad no' come sae near Mansie. Mansie turned tae gang awa' wi' the twa selkie bairns i' his erms—dey wur sookin' at his co't as gin dey been at the mither's breest—whin he heard the selkie mither gae a groan sae dismal an' how, an' sae human like, that it geed stra'cht tae his h'ert, an' fairly owercam' him.

He luckid about an' saw the mither selkie lyin' on her side, wi' her heed on the rock; an' he saw—as seur as iver he saw a t'ing on earth—the tares feeman' fae baith her eyes. Tae see nature wirkan' sae strong i' the peur dumb crater, he could nae bide it mair. Sae he bent doon an' passed baith the peerie selkies on the rock. The mither teuk dem i' her megs, an' clespid dem tae her bosom, as if sheu been a bothy wi' a bairn. An' sheu luckid i' Mansie's face.

Oh, sic' a blithe luck the selkie gae him!

It deud Mansie geud tae see her. For dat day the selkie deud ivery t'ing but speak.

Mansie wus dan a young man; an' a while efter dat he merried. An' a lang while efter he merried, whin his bairns wur groun-ap folk, he geed tae bide on the wast side o' Eday. Ae bonnie e'enin', Mansie geed tae fish for coal-fish aff o' a oot-lyan' rock. He wus a oot-flow rock, that ye could only gang tae dry shod wi' low water.

The fish wad no' tak' ava' for a peerie while; bit whin the flood tide began tae flow, the fishing teuk brawly, sae that Mansie steud an' hauled whill he filled his sea-cubbie. The fish teuk sae bonnie, that i' his eagerness tae fish he forgot the gate he hed tae gang. An' whin he cam' tae gang heem, he was sairly stunned tae see the trink atween him an' the land fairly flou'd ower, an' the sea sae deep it wad hae geen ower his heed.

Mansie cried an' better cried; but he wus far fae ony hoose, and nee bothy heard his cries.

The water raise an' raise, cam' ap abeun his knees, abeun his henches, ap tae his armpits; an' miny a sair sich age he, as de water cam' aye hicher an' nearer tae his chin. He cried whill he wus hoarse, an' he could cry nee mair. An' dan he gae ap a' hup' o' life, an' saw naething afore him bit dismal daeth.

An' dan, as de sea wus comin' roond his neck, an' comin' noos an' dans i' peerie ripples tae his mooth, jeust as he f'and the sea beginnan' tae lift him fae the rock—summin' grippid him bae the neck o' the co't an' whippid him aff o' his feet. He kent no' what it wus, or whar he wus, till he f'and his feet at the boddam, whar he could wad ashore i' safety. An' whin de craeter 'at hed haud o' him let him gae, he wadded tae the dry land.

He luckid whar he cam' fae, an' saw a muckle selkie swiman' tae the rock whar she dookid, teuk ap his cubbie o' fish, an' swam wi'd tae the land. He wadded oot an' teuk the cubbie fu' o' fish oot o' her mooth; an' he said we' a' his he'rt,

'Geud bliss the selkie that deus no' forget.'

An' sheu luckid tae him, as gin sheu wad hae said, could sheu hae spoken,

'Ae geud turn meets anither.'

Sheu wus the sam' selkie that he saw calvin' on Hackness forty years afore.

He said he wad hae kent her mitherly luck amang a thoosan'. Bit she wus groun an' auld. Sae that wus the selkie that deud no' forget. I wiss' a'bothy may mind on what's geud, as weel as that selkie.

Isle of Man

NIKESSEN'S POOL

ONE Hollantide, long, long ago, a farmer of the name of Finlo Corlett came to live with his wife Ealish and their family at a farm called Glen Roi in the parish of Lonan. A good little farm it was too, with sweet pasture for cattle, a run for sheep on the mountain, and a river in the glen below that never ran dry.

Finlo and Ealish had three children. Robin, the eldest helped his father about the farm. Nessie helped her mother in the dairy, and was a good hand at spinning and quilting. Darraday, the youngest, was not old enough to do very much yet, but she would be gathering the eggs and feeding the calves and milking Spot the cow that she called her own. The rest of the time herself and Mona the sheepdog would be playing together, for there weren't two closer friends in the world than Darraday and Mona. If you saw one you'd soon see the other.

Of course Finlo and Ealish did not have a favourite among their children, but Darraday seemed to have something more about her than the other two. She'd a bright cheerful face and she loved a joke and at all hours of the day you'd hear her singing about the place.

At first the day was with Finlo, his sheep and his cattle were strong and healthy and his crops did well.

But as everyone in the parish knew there was one drawback to the farm. In the river in the glen below was the pool called Nikessen. A dark pool it was, with a patch of grass beside it and alder and birch and ash and sycamore hanging over it so thick the sun never got through. There wasn't a cuirn tree or hazel or a tramman, the good trees, anywhere in sight.

'Keep the cattle well away from it, Finlo,' the neighbours warned him. 'And see your fencing is strong down there in the glen. Yonder pool is a strange place, cold as ice even on a day in summer, and there was never yet a fisherman that plumbed the depths of it. Indeed I've heard tell...'

But what they'd heard tell Finlo never knew, for he did not listen. He kept his cattle well away from the pool, fenced the field and paid no heed to what the neighbours said.

'All talk, that's what it is,' he would say.

Ealish took more heed to the stories the neighbours told. Once or twice on a moonlit night when they heard voices in the distance and then music and singing she'd say in a frightened voice.

'It's from Nikessen! It's the one from Nikessen come up to put a sight on us here in the world above.'

Finlo would only laugh at this, saying,

'People going home from a giense. That's what it is. Ones from Nikessen indeed! '

But Ealish was not at all sure he was right.

'There's strange ones in Nikessen,' she told him. 'People have seen a tall man, taller than any round here. With shiny bright hair, like gold. And others too, only not clear and bright like him...'

'People will tell you anything if you'll listen,' says Finlo.

The time went on and Finlo made very little use of the field by the pool. However, one day he saw the fine grass there and he said to himself it's a mortal pity to let it all go to waste. I'll put the calves there. Six of them there were, some brown, some black, some white, and all lively as crickets.

'The fencing is good,' he told Ealish. 'They'll take no harm.'

So next morning Darraday drove them down to the field and shut the gate on them.

For about a week all went well, then one day early in May Finlo took Robin and Nessie and Darraday with him to the mart and they were late coming back, for it was a very misty evening and Finlo was afraid to drive the horse too fast.

'Get the calves in, good soul, while Robin and myself do the milking,' her father said to Darraday.

On the edge of dark in the swirling mist, Darraday went down to the field to call home the calves.

'Kebeg, Kebeg, Kebeg! ' she shouted, the way she always called home the calves. They came running up at the sound of her voice, but there were only five of them.

'Kebeg, Kebeg, Kebeg! ' she called again, but nothing happened so she took the five home safe thinking she'd go back for the other later.

'You do and help Darraday to find it, Robin and Nessie,' said the father.

They looked in the briars and under hawthorn bushes and in gorse bushes, but nowhere could they find the missing calf.

'The best one of the lot,' said their father when he came to help them. 'The one with the star on its forehead. It's a mighty queer thing where it's got to. That fencing is as strong as ever and not a track to be seen anywhere in the grass near the pool.'

'We told you to keep the beasts away from Nikessen,' said the neighbours when they heard what had happened.

'Nikessen has got nothing to do with it! ' says Finlo, very cross and sharp.

'Well,' said Ealish, 'wherever the creature is, if it's still in the earthly world, it's a strange thing you're not able to find it.'

A day or two after this, Finlo says to Ealish,

'I can't be losing any more calves without track or trace, and there's good grass in yonder field near the pool. Suppose tomorrow Darraday was to go down and mind them for a day.'

'Never! ' says Ealish.

'And why not? What harm could come to her? She's not far from the house and Mona would be with her.'

Ealish did not half like the idea and at first she would not listen to Finlo, but at long last, when Darraday promised faithfully to keep well away from the pool and to come back home at once to tell her father if anything happened to the calves, she gave way.

The next morning, Darraday and Mona took themselves off to the field to mind the calves. Darraday kept a sharp eye on them but found time to look for primroses on the river bank, to play hide-and-seek among the gorse bushes with Mona, to paddle in the river well away from Nikessen, and all in all the pair of them had a fine time together.

So that day passed and many another after it. The primroses in the glen gave place to bluebells and the bluebells in their turn gave place to the yellow wild roses that filled the glen with their scent, and one day much to her mother's surprise, Darraday came back to the house with the calves in the little evening.

'And what for are you coming back as early as this?' asks her mother, busy baking soda cake on the griddle over the fire.

'I thought I heard you calling to me.'

'No, child, I didn't call you.'

'But it sounded just like your voice. You said, "Come here, Darraday, I want you".'

'No, child,' said her mother, a strange look on her face, 'it wasn't me at all. But you did the right thing to come back.'

'It's early,' said Darraday. 'Will I take the calves back again?'

'No, indeed not!' says her mother. 'Put the creatures in their house and let them stay there for the rest of the day. And there's something I'm wanting to tell you. If ever you hear a voice calling your name down there by Nikessen, you must never answer it. Never! Never say, "Here I am," or anything at all. Promise me that now, child, and I'll be easier and you going there.'

Darraday promised and promised faithfully that she would remember this and her mother felt easier in her mind. So the summer days passed and Darraday and

Mona kept the calves safely in the field by Nikessen's pool.

The one evening there was no sign of Darraday coming back from the field at her usual time. When her mother went to the door to look for her she found the mist had crept up the glen from the sea and had rolled down from the mountain; and she could feel the touch of its damp fingers everywhere. She turned back to where the table was set for tea and, though it was summer, she felt that the red fire on the hearth and the brass candlesticks that shone on the mantelpiece, gave a welcome it was good to see. All of a sudden there was a loud barking at the door and there was Mona, barking the way she always did when herself and Darraday were separated.

'Finlo! Robin! Nessie! ' she called. 'Come and look for Darraday.'

And they left whatever work they were doing and rushed down into the field.

'Darraday, Darraday, Darraday,' they called in the field, beside the pool and down in the glen, but not a trace of Darraday could they see. In the evening when they heard the news, the neighbours came to help. But they had no better luck.

'We told you, Finlo,' they said. 'There's people been lost in Nikessen without track or trace and never seen again in the living world. But you were the clever fellow and you were only laughing at us. It's the ones from Nikessen that's taken her, the way they took that calf of yours a while back there. We might as well stop looking for her.'

But her mother would have none of this talk.

'The child made me a promise,' she said. 'And Darraday was ever the child to keep any promise she made. Wherever she's gone and however she's gone, she didn't go off of her own free will. There's been a trick played on her. We must try to bring her back. Nothing will make me give up hope.'

So that night and the next Finlo and Ealish took it in turns to watch till daylight in the field and,

'Darraday, Darraday, Darraday,' they called all night.

The first day and the second day they did the same, but there was no sign of Darraday. On the morning of the third day, Ealish was seated at the kitchen table trying to eat some breakfast when all of a sudden a thought came into her mind. In a minute up she gets and puts on her best cloak and bonnet and makes ready for the road.

'Where are you off to?' asks Finlo.

'I'm going to the saggyrt's house,' she says.

'The saggyrt's house? And what do you want with him?'

'I'll tell you when I come back,' she says and, with that, away off with her.

'Come you in, Mistress Corlett,' says the saggyrt in none too pleasant a tone. 'I hear you're in trouble and from what I hear it's only trouble you can expect, if you let a young child wander near Nikessen all on its own.'

Very high and mighty he was.

But Ealish was determined to get Darraday back and she paid no heed to him.

'It's not like that at all,' she says. 'We didn't let the child wander near Nikessen. She went there to look after the calves and she looked after them safe enough every day this summer until the day before yesterday. She made me a promise when she went down to the pool and I think the ones from Nikessen have played a trick on her.'

The saggyrt climbed down from his high perch when he heard this and in a kind voice he says,

'Sit you down, Mistress Corlett, and be you telling me the whole story.'

He listened to Ealish's story and then he says, 'And how can I help you, mistress?'

'I believe,' says Ealish, 'that if I could say the good words and me watching there by the pool I could maybe bring Darraday back. Only I don't know what words to say and that's what I've come to ask you.'

'Well, now,' says the saggyrt, 'I'll tell you what you should do. The first misty night let you and Finlo go and wait beside the pool. Hide yourselves away in the

bushes and keep quiet. Don't say a word until you see ones rising from the pool. That's the time to speak.'

And he tells Ealish the good words to say.

When that very night turned out misty Ealish went out with Finlo as the saggyrt had said and waited behind the alder and birch and ash and sycamore beside the pool. At first all was quiet, not even the sound of a curlew came through the mist, then soft at first and louder and louder they heard voices and music and singing, and shadowy figures began to rise up from the pool and moved to the bank. The last one that came was taller than all the others and his hair was bright and shining like gold; and he led Darraday by the hand.

The minute Ealish saw her she called out in a loud voice as the saggyrt had told her,

'Darraday, child, come to your mother and father.'

And then,

'Ayns ennym y Jee as y Vac as y Spyrryd Noa.'

'I command you to give us back the child.'

At the sound of these words there was a fluttering in the bushes and a splashing in the pool. All at once the voices and the music and singing fell quiet and there was Darraday standing alone on the patch of green grass beside Nikessen. Her mother rushed forward and lifted her in her arms.

'Darraday, graih veen, you're safe! ' was all she could say.

'Mother! Father! ' Darraday cried as they carried her back to the house and seated her in the chair by the kitchen fire.

'Where am I at all?' she cried like a person waking up from a dream, her eyes all misty and sleepy.

'Back safe in the kitchen at home,' said her mother.

Darraday began to look round and her eyes began to clear and to shine bright as she saw her mother and father and Nessie and Robin all waiting to have supper with her, and Mona taking such joy of her, the whole kitchen was full of her barking.

'Yes,' says Darraday, 'that's the way I thought of you all the time I was away.'

'Eat, child,' says her mother and Darraday ate a slice of bread and drank some milk; and the colour began to come back into her pale cheeks.

'Mother, they played a trick on me, the ones from Nikessen.'

'Yes, child, I know they did.'

'I didn't break my promise. They said: "It's me. Your mother. Come to fetch you home in the mist. Are you there?" At first I didn't answer, but they went on for a long time. When I heard, "Of course it's me, child. Don't hide away from me. There's nothing to be afraid of," I was sure it was you and then they were all about me. There was nothing I could do to stop them.'

She paused to catch her breath, then continued,

'Like shadows they were and yet they were strong and they carried me away, down, down, down. Down into a shiny land where everything was bright and glittering and there was music and singing and they offered me food. Rich food it was, fruit and cake and wine. Big yellow oranges and bright red apples, all set on golden plates and wine in big silver cups and cakes on silver dishes. But I wouldn't have any of it, for by now I knew it was all a trick they'd played on me. I was hungry, but every time they put food in front of me and said, "Taste, taste," I thought of you all here in the kitchen and the table set for supper the way it is now with bread and milk and oat cake and cheese and binjean. And the fire on the hearth all red and bright and Mona sitting by it and the brass candlesticks and the grandfather clock. And every time they offered it to me I said, "No, I don't want any of this food," and I thought again of you all here, and hungry though I was I didn't eat anything.'

'Well, here you are back, safe and sound and here's the supper table all ready and you can eat now,' says her mother. 'Let you eat a good meal too, for it's famished you must be after all this time.'

So Darraday began to eat, and a good supper she made, for who wouldn't if they had had nothing to eat for three days and three nights.

Next Hollantide, Finlo Corlett moved away from Glen Roi and took a farm in Maughold, the next par-

ish, where Darraday grew up safe from such dangers as Nikessen.

Some people said that at times she would have a far-away look about her, as if she was listening for voices or music that nobody but herself could hear, but her mother and father said she was no different and she was dearer to them than ever, both for herself and for what had happened to be.

BILLY BEG, TOM BEG AND THE FAIRIES

NOT far from Dalby, Billy Beg and Tom Beg, two hunchback cobblers, lived together on a lonely croft. Billy Beg was sharper and cleverer than Tom Beg, who was always at his command. One day Billy Beg gave Tom Beg a staff, and quoth he,

'Tom Beg, go to the mountain and fetch home the white sheep.'

Tom Beg took the staff and went to the mountain, but he could not find the white sheep. At last, when he was far from home and dusk was coming on, he began to think that he had best go back. The night was fine, and stars and a small crescent moon were in the sky. No sound was to be heard but the curlew's sharp whistle.

Tom was hastening home, and had almost reached Glen Rushen when a grey mist gathered, and he lost his way. But it was not long before the mist cleared and Tom Beg found himself in a green glen, such as he

had never seen before, though he thought he knew every glen within five miles of him, for he was born and reared in the neighbourhood. He was marvelling and wondering where he could be when he heard a far-away sound drawing near to him.

'Aw,' said he to himself, 'there are more than myself afoot on the mountains tonight; I'll have company.'

The sound grew louder. First it was like the humming of bees, then like the rushing of Glen Meay waterfall, and last it was like the marching and the murmur of a crowd. It was the fairy host. Of a sudden, the glen was full of fine horses and of little people riding on them, with the lights on their red caps shining like the stars above, and making the night as bright as day. There was the blowing of horns, the waving of flags, the playing of music, and the barking of many little dogs.

Tom Beg thought that he had never seen anything so splendid as all he saw there. In the midst of the drilling and dancing and singing, one of them spied Tom, and then Tom saw coming towards him the grandest little man he had ever set eyes upon, dressed in gold and silver, and silk and satin, shining like a raven's wing.

'It is a bad time you have chosen to come this way,' said the little man, who was evidently the king.

'Yes, but it is not here that I wish to be,' said Tom.

Then said the king, 'Are you one of us tonight, Tom?'

'I am surely,' said Tom.

'Then,' said the king, 'it will be your duty to take the pass-word. You must stand at the foot of the glen and as each regiment goes by you must take the pass-word: it is "Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday".'

'I will do that with a heart and a half,' said Tom.

At daybreak, the fiddlers took up their fiddles, the fairy army set itself in order, the fiddlers played before them out of the glen, and sweet that music was. Each regiment gave the pass-word to Tom as it went by–

'Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.'

And last of all came the king, and he too gave the

pass-word: 'Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.' Then he called in Manx to one of his men:

'Take the hump from this fellow's back.'

And before the words were out of his mouth the hump was whisked off Tom Beg's back and thrown into the hedge. How proud now was Tom, who so found himself the straightest man in the Isle of Man. He went down the mountain, and came home early in the morning with light heart and eager step.

Billy Beg wondered greatly when he saw Tom Beg so straight and strong; and when Tom had rested and refreshed himself, he told his story, how he had met the fairies who came every night to Glen Rushen to drill.

The next night Billy Beg set off along the mountain road, and came at last to the green glen. About midnight he heard the trampling of horses, the lashing of whips, the barking of dogs, and a great hullabaloo, and beheld the fairies and their king, their dogs and their horses all at drill in the glen as Tom Beg had said.

When they saw the humpback they all stopped, and one came forward and very crossly asked his business.

'I am one of yourselves for the night, and should be glad to do you some service,' said Billy Beg.

So he was sent to take the pass-word: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. And at daybreak the king said,

'It is time for us to be off.'

And up came regiment after regiment, giving Billy Beg the pass-word,

'Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.'

Last of all came the king with his men, and gave the pass-word also,

'Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.'

'And SUNDAY! ' shouted Billy Beg, thinking himself so clever.

At that there was a great outcry.

'Get the hump that was taken off that other fellow's back last night and put it on this man,' cried the king,

with flashing eyes, pointing to the hump that lay under the hedge.

Before the words were out of his mouth, the hump was clapt on Billy's back.

'Now,' said the king, 'be off. And if ever I find you here again, I'll clap another hump on to your front.'

On that they all marched away with one great shout, leaving poor Billy Beg standing where they had found him, with a hump growing on to each shoulder. He came home next day, dragging one foot after another, with a wizened face, and as cross as two sticks, with his two humps on his back.

And if they are not off him now they are there still.

Ireland

THOMAS CONNOLLY AND THE BANSHEE

AW, the banshee? Well, as I was striving to tell ye, I was going home from work one day, from Mr Cassidy's that I tould ye of, in the dusk o' the evening. I had more nor a mile—aye, it was nearer two mile—to thrack to, where I was lodgin' with a dacent widdy woman I knew, Biddy Maguire be name, so as to be near me work.

It was the first week in November, an' a lonesome road I had to travel, an' dark enough, wid threes above it; an' about halfways there was a bit of a brudge I had to cross, over one o' them little sthrames that runs into the Doddher. I walked on in the middle iv the road, for there was no toepath at that time, Misther Harry, nor for many a long day afther that; but, as I was sayin', I walked along till I come nigh upon the brudge, where the road was a bit open, an' there, right enough, I seen the hog's back o' the ould-fashioned brudge that used to be there till it was pulled down, an' a white mist steamin' up out o' the wather all around it.

Well, now, Misther Harry, often as I'd passed by the place before, that night it seemed sthrange to me, an' like a place ye might see in a dhrame; an' as I come up to it I began to feel a could wind blowin' through the hollow o' me heart. 'Musha Thomas,' sez I to meself, 'is it yerself that's in it?' sez I; 'or, if it is, what's the matter wid ye at all, at all?' sez I; so I put a bould face on it, an' I made a sthruggle to set one leg afore the other, ontil I came to the rise o' the brudge. And there, God be good to us! in a cantle o' the wall I seen an ould woman, as I thought, sittin' on her hunkers, all crouched together, an' her head bowed down, seemin'-ly in the greatest affliction.

Well, I pitied the ould craythur, an' thought I wasn't worth a thraneen, for the mortial fright I was in, I up an' sez to her, 'That's a cowld lodgin' for ye, ma'am.' Well, the sorra ha'porth she sez to that, nor tuk more notice o' me than if I hadn't let a word out o' me, but kep' rockin' herself to an' fro, as if her heart was breakin'; so I sez to her again, 'Eh, ma'am, is there anythin' the matther wid ye?' An' I made for to touch her on the shouldher, on'y somethin' stopt me, for as I looked closer at her I saw she was no more an ould woman nor she was an ould cat. The first thing I tuk notice to, Misther Harry, was her hair, that was sthreelin' down over his showldhers, an' a good yard on the ground on aich side of her.

O, be the hoky farmer, but that was the hair!

The likes of it I never seen on mortial woman, young or ould, before nor sense. It grew as sthrong out of her as out of e'er a young slip of a girl ye could see; but the colour of it was a misthery to describe. The first squint I got of it I thought it was silvery grey, like an ould crone's; but when I got up beside her I saw, be the glance o' the sky, it was a soart iv an Iscariot colour, an' a shine out of it like floss silk. It ran over her showldhers and the two shapely arms she was lanin' her head on, for all the world like Mary Magdalen's in a picther; and then I persaved that the grey cloak and the green gownd undhernaith it was made of no earthly matarial I ever laid eyes on.

Now, I needn't tell ye that I seen all this in the twinkle of a bed-post—long as I take to make the narration of it. So I made a step back from her, an' 'The Lord be betune us an' harm! ' sez I, out loud, an' wid that I blessed meself.

Well, Misther Harry, the word wasn't out o' me mouth afore she turned her face on me. Aw, Misther Harry, but 'twas that was the awfullest apparation ever I seen, the face of her as she looked up at me! God forgive me for sayin' it, but 'twas more like the face of the 'Axy Homo' bezand in Marlboro' Sthreet Chapel nor like any face I could mintion—as pale as a corpse, an' a most o' freckles on it, like the freckles on a turkey's egg; an' the two eyes sewn in wid red thread, from the terrible power o' crying the' had to do; an' such a pair iv eyes as the' wor, Misther Harry, as blue as two forget-me-nots, an' as cowld as the moon in a bog-hole of a frosty night, an' a dead-an'-live look in them that sent a cowld shiver through the marra o' me bones. Be the mortial! ye could ha' rung a tay cupful o' cowld paspiration out o' the hair o' me head that minute, so ye could.

Well, I thought the life 'ud lave me intirely when she riz up from her hunkers, till, bedad! she looked mostly as tall as Dublin's Nelson's Pillar; an' wid the two eyes gazin' back at me, an' her two arms stretched out before hor, an' a keine out of her that riz the hair o' me scalp till it was as stiff as the hog's bristles in a new hearth broom, away she glides—glides round the angle o' the brudge, an' down with her into the sthrame that ran undhernaith it. 'Twas then I began to suspect what she was.

'Wisha, Thomas! ' sez I to meself, sez I; an' I made a great struggle to get me two legs into a throt, in spite o' the spavin o' fright the pair o' them wor in; an' how I brought meself home that same night the Lord in heaven only knows, for I never could tell; but I must ha' tumbled agin the door, and shot in head foremost into the middle o' the flure, where I lay in a dead swoon for mostly an hour; and the first I knew was Mrs Maguire stannin' over me with a jorum o' punch she was pourin' down me throath, to bring back the

life into me, an' me head in a pool of cowld wather she dashed over me in her first fright.

'Arrah, Mister Connolly,' shashee, 'what ails ye?' shashee, 'to put the scare on a lone woman like that?' shashee.

'Am I in this world or the next?' sez I.

"Musha! where else would ye be on'y here in my kitchen?' shashee.

'O, glory be to God! ' sez I, 'but I thought I was in Purgathory at the laste, not to mintion an uglier place,' sez I, 'only it's too cowld I find meself, an' not too hot,' sez I.

'Faix, an' maybe ye wor more nor half-ways there, on'y for me,' shashee; 'but what's come to you at all, at all? Is it your fetch ye seen, Mister Connolly?'

'Aw, naboclish! ' sez I. 'Never mind what I seen,' sez I.

So be degrees I began to come to a little; an' that's the way I met the banshee, Misther Harry!

'But how did you know it really was the banshee after all, Thomas?'

Begor, I knew the apparation of her well enough; but 'twas confirmed by a sarcumstance that occurred the same time. There was a Misther O'Nales was come on a visit, ye must know, to a place in the neighbourhood—one o' the ould O'Nales iv the county Tyrone, a rale ould Irish family—an' the banshee was heard keening round the house that same night, be more then one that was in it; an' sure enough, Misther Harry, he was found dead in his bed the next mornin'.

So if it wasn't the banshee I seen that time, I'd like to know what else it could a' been.

MARY HOGAN'S LEPRECHAUN

HERE'S a sort o people that every bod must have met wid sum time or another. I man thim people tha purtinds not to b'liev in things that in thei hearts they *do* b'liev in, an' are mortiall afeard o' too.

Now Failey Mooney was one o' these.

Failey (iv any o' yez knew him) was a rollockin' rattlin', divil-may-care sort ov a chap like—but that's neither here nor there; he was always talkin', one non sinse or another; an' among the rest o' his folleries he purtinded not to b'lieve in the fairies, the Lepre chauns, an' the Poocas, an' he evin sumtimes had the impedince to purtind to doubt o' ghosts, that every body b'lieves in, at any rate.

Yit sum people used to wink an' luk knowin' whin Failey was gostherin', fur it was obsarved that he was mighty shy o' crassin' the foord o' Ahnamoe afther night-fall; an' that whin onst he was ridin' past the ould church o' Tipper in the dark, tho' he'd got enough o' pottheen into him to make any man stout, he med the horse trot so that there was no keepin' up wid him, an' iv'ry now an' thin he'd throw a sharp luk-out ovir his lift shouldher.

Well, one night there was a parcel o' the neighbours sittin' dhrinken' an' talkin' at Larry Reilly's public-house, an' Failey was one o' the party. He was, as

usual, gittin' an wid his nonsinse an' baldherdash about the fairies, an' swearin' that he didn't b'lieve there was any live things, barrin' min an' bastes, an' birds and fishes, an' sich things as a body cud see, an' he wint on talkin' in so profane a way o' the good people, that som o' the company grew timid an' begun to crass thimsilves, not knowin' what might happin', whin an ould woman called Mary Hogan wid a long blue cloak about her, that was sittin' in the chimbly corner smokin' her pipe widout takin' the laste share in the conversation, tuk the pipe out o' her mouth, an' threw the ashes out o' it, an' spit in the fire, an' turnin' round, luked Failey straight in the face.

'An' so you don't b'lieve there's sich things as Leprechauns, don't ye?' sed she.

Well, Failey luked raythor daunted, but howsumdiver he sed nothin'.

'Why, thin, upon my throth, an' it well becomes the likes o' ye, an' that's nothin' but a bit uv a gossoon, to take upon yer to purtind not to b'lieve what yer father, an' yer father's father, an' his father afore him, nivir med the laste doubt uv. But to make the matther short, seein' 's b'lievin' they say, an' I, that might be yer gran'mother, tell ye there is sich things as Leprechauns, an' what's more, that I mysilf seen one o' thim—there's fur ye, now! '

All the people in the room luked quite surprised at this, an' crowded up to the fireplace to listen to her. Failey thried to laugh, but it wouldn't do, nobody minded him.

'I remimber,' sed she, 'some time afther I married the honest man, that's now dead and gone, it was by the same token jist a little afore I lay in o' my first child (an' that's many a long day ago), I was sittin', as I sed, out in our little bit o' a gardin, wid my knittin' in my hand, watchin' sum bees we had that war goin' to swarm. It was a fine sunshiny day about the middle o' June, an' the bees war hummin' and flyin' backwards an' forwards frum the hives, an' the birds war chirpin' an' hoppin' an the bushes, an' the buttherflies war flyin' about an' sittin' an the flowers, an' ev'ry thing smelt so fresh an' so sweet, an' I felt so happy, that

I hardly knew whare I was.

'Well, all uv a suddint, I heard among sum rows of banes we had in a corner o' the gardin, a n'ise that wint tick tack, tick tack, jist fur all the world as iv a brogue-maker was puttin' an the heel uv a pump. "The Lord presarve us," sed I to mysilf, "what in the world can that be?" So I laid down my knittin', an' got up, an' stole ovir to the banes, an' nivir believe me iv I didn't see, sittin' right foremint me, in the very middle of thim, a bit of an ould man, not a quarther so big as a new-born child, wid a little cocked hat an his head, an' a dudeen in his mouth, smokin' away; an' a plain, ould-fashioned, dhrab-coloured coat, wid big brass buttons upon it, an his back, an' a pair o' massy silver buckles in his shoes, that a'most covered his feet they war so big, an' he workin' away as hard as ivir he could, heelin' a little pair o' pumps.

'The instant minnit I clapt my two eyes upon him I knew him to be a Leprechaun, an' as I was stout an' foolhardy, sez I to him, "God save ye honist man! That's hard work ye're at this hot day." He looked up in my face quite vexed like; so wid that I med a run at him an' cotch hould i' him in my hand, an' axed him whare was his purse o' money.'

"Money?" sed he, "money *annagh*! An' whare on airth id a poor little ould crathur like mysilf git money?"

"Come, come," sed I, "none o' yer thricks upon thravellers; doesn't every body know that Leprechauns, like ye, are all as rich as the divil himsilf."

'So I pulled out a knife I'd in my pocket, an' put on as wicked a face as ivir I could an' in throth, that was no aisy matther fur me thin, fur I was as comely an' good-humoured a lukin' girl as you'd see frum this to Ballitore—an' swore by this and by that, if he didn't instantly gi' me his purse, or show me a pot o' goold, I'd cut the nose aff his face. Well, to be shure, the little man did luk so frightened at hearin' these words, that I a'most found it in my heart to pity the poor little crathur.

"This," sed he, "come wid me jist a couple o' fields aff, an' I'll show ye whare I keep my money."

'So I wint, still houldin' him fast in my hand, an' keepin' my eyes fixed upon him, whin all o' a suddint

I h'ard a whiz-z-z behind me.

"There! There! " cries he, "There's yer bees all swarmin' an' goin' aff wid thimsilves like blazes."

'I, like a fool as I was, turned my head round, an' whin I seen nothin' at all, an' luked back at the Leprechaun, an' found nothin' at all at all in my hand—fur whin I had the ill luck to take my eyes aff him, ye see, he slipped out o' my fingers jist as iv he was med o' fog or smoke, an' the sarra the fut he iver come nigh my garden agin.'

TEIG O'KANE AND THE CORPSE

THERE was once a grown-up lad in the County Leitrim, and he was strong and lively, and the son of a rich farmer. His father had plenty of money, and he did not spare it on the son. Accordingly, when the boy grew up he liked sport better than work, and, as his father had no other children, he loved this one so much that he allowed him to do in everything just as it pleased himself.

He seldom spent a night in his father's house, but he used to be always out rambling, and there was

'grádh gach cailin i mbrollach a léine'
'the love of every girl in the breast of his shirt'
and it's many's the kiss he got and he gave, for he was very handsome, and there wasn't a girl in the country but would fall in love with him, only for him to fasten his two eyes on her, and it was for that someone made this *rann* on him:

'Feuch an rógaire 'g iarraidh póige,
Ni h-iongantas mor e a bheith mar ata
Ag leanamhaint a geómhnuidhe d'árnán na gráineóige
Anuas 's anios 's nna chodladh 'sa' lá.'

'Look at the rogue, it's for kisses he's rambling,
It isn't much wonder, for that was his way;
'He's like an old hedgehog, at night he'll be scrambling,
From this place to that, but he'll sleep in the day.

At last he became very wild and unruly. He wasn't to be seen day nor night in his father's house, but always rambling or going on his *céilidhe* from place to place.

One night, as he was walking out to cool his heated blood, he heard the sound of many voices, and the trampling of feet on the road before him.

'I don't know who can be out so late at night as this, and on such a lonely road,' said he to himself.

He stood listening, and he heard the voices of many people talking through other, but he could not understand what they were saying.

'Oh, *wirra*! ' says he, 'I'm afraid. It's not Irish or English they have; it can't be they're Frenchmen! '

He went on a couple of yards further, and he saw well enough by the light of the moon a band of little people coming towards him, and they were carrying something big and heavy with them.

'Oh, murder! ' says he to himself, 'sure it can't be that they're the good people that's in it! '

Every *rib* of hair that was on his head stood up, and there fell a shaking on his bones, for he saw that they were coming to him fast.

He looked at them again, and perceived that there

were about twenty little men in it, and there was not a man at all of them higher than about three feet or three feet and a half, and some of them were grey, and seemed very old. He looked again, but he could not make out what was the heavy thing they were carrying until they came up to him, and then they all stood round about him. They threw the heavy thing down on the road, and he saw on the spot that it was a dead body.

He became as cold as the Death, and there was not a drop of blood running in his veins when an old little grey *maneen* came up to him and said,

'Isn't it lucky we met you, Teig O'Kane?'

Poor Teig could not bring out a word at all, nor open his lips, if he were to get the world for it, and so he gave no answer.

'Teig O'Kane,' said the little grey man again, 'isn't it timely you met us?'

Teig could not answer him.

'Teig O'Kane,' says he the third time, 'isn't it lucky and timely that we met you?'

But Teig remained silent, for he was afraid to return an answer, and his tongue was as if it was tied to the roof of his mouth.

The little grey man turned to his companions, and there was joy in his bright little eyes.

'And now,' says he, 'Teig O'Kane hasn't a word, we can do with him what we please. Teig, Teig,' says he, 'you're living a bad life, and we can make a slave of you now, and you cannot withstand us, for there's no use in trying to go against us. Lift that corpse.'

Teig was so frightened that he was only able to utter the two words, 'I won't.' For as frightened as he was, he was obstinate and stiff, the same as ever.

'Teig O'Kane won't lift the corpse,' said the little *maneen*, with a wicked little laugh, for all the world like the breaking of a *lock* of dry *kippeens*, and with a little harsh voice like the striking of a cracked bell. 'Teig O'Kane won't lift the corpse—make him lift it.'

And before the word was out of his mouth they had all gathered round poor Teig, and they all talking and laughing through other.

Teig tried to run from them, but they followed him and a man of them stretched out his foot before him as he ran, so that Teig was thrown in a heap on the road. Then before he could rise up the fairies caught him, some by the hands and some by the feet, and they held him tight, in a way that he could not stir, with his face against the ground. Six or seven of them raised the body then, and pulled it over to him, and left it down on his back. The breast of the corpse was squeezed against Teig's back and shoulders, and the arms of the corpse were thrown around Teig's neck. Then they stood back from him a couple of yards, and let him get up.

He rose, foaming at the mouth and cursing, and he shook himself, thinking to throw the corpse off his back. But his fear and his wonder were great when he found that the two arms had a tight hold round his own neck, and that the two legs were squeezing his hips firmly, and that, however strongly he tried, he could not throw it off, any more than a horse can throw off its saddle. He was terribly frightened then, and he thought he was lost.

'Ochone! for ever,' said he to himself, 'it's the bad life I'm leading that has given the good people this power over me. I promise to God and Mary, Peter and Paul, Patrick and Bridget, that I'll mend my ways for as long as I have to live, if I come clear out of this danger.'

The little grey man came up to him again, and said he to him,

'Now, Teigeen,' says he, 'you didn't lift the body when I told you to lift it, and see how you were made to lift it; perhaps when I tell you to bury it you won't bury it until you're made to bury it! '

'Anything at all that I can do for your honour,' said Teig, 'I'll do it,' for he was getting sense already, and if it had not been for the great fear that was on him, he never would have let that civil word slip out of his mouth.

The little man laughed a sort of laugh again.

'You're getting quiet now, Teig,' says he. 'I'll go bail but you'll be quiet enough before I'm done with you.

Listen to me now, Teig O'Kane, and if you don't obey me in all I'm telling you to do, you'll repent it. You must carry with you this corpse that is on your back to Teampoll-Démus, and you must bring it into the church with you, and make a grave for it in the very middle of the church, and you must raise up the flags and put them down again the very same way, and you must carry the clay out of the church and leave the place as it was when you came, so that no one could know that there had been anything changed.'

When the grey little man had done speaking, his comrades laughed and clapped their hands together.

'Glic! Glic! Hwee! Hwee! ' they all cried; 'go on, go on, you have eight hours before you till daybreak, and if you haven't this man buried before the sun rises, you're lost.'

They struck a fist and a foot behind on him, and drove him on in the road. He was obliged to walk, and to walk fast, for they gave him no rest.

He thought himself that there was not a wet path, or a dirty *boreen*, or a crooked contrary road in the whole county, that he had not walked that night. The night was at times very dark, and whenever there would come a cloud across the moon he could see nothing, and then he used often to fall. Sometimes he was hurt, and sometimes he escaped, but he was obliged always to rise on the moment and hurry on. Sometimes the moon would break out clearly, and then he would look behind him and see the little people following at his back. And he heard them speaking amongst themselves, talking and crying out, and screaming like a flock of sea-gulls; and if he was to save his soul he never understood as much as one word of what they were saying.

He did not know how far he had walked, when at last one of them cried out to him, 'Stop here! ' He stood, and they all gathered round him.

'Do you see those withered trees over there?' says the boy to him again. 'Teampoll Démus is among those trees, and you must go in there by yourself, for we cannot follow you or go with you. We must remain here. Go on boldly.'

Teig looked from him, and he saw a high wall that was in places half broken down, and an old grey church on the inside of the wall, and about a dozen withered old trees scattered here and there round it. There was neither leaf nor twig on any of them, but their bare crooked branches were stretched out like the arms of any angry man when he threatens. He had no help for it, but was obliged to go forward. He was a couple of hundred yards from the church, but he walked on, and never looked behind him until he came to the gate of the churchyard. The old gate was thrown down, and he had no difficulty in entering. He turned then to see if any of the little people were following him, but there came a cloud over the moon, and the night became so dark that he could see nothing. He went into the churchyard, and he walked up the old grassy pathway leading to the church. When he reached the door, he found it locked. The door was large and strong, and he did not know what to do. At last he drew out his knife with difficulty, and stuck it in the wood to try if it were not rotten, but it was not.

'Now,' said he to himself, 'I have no more to do; the door is shut, and I can't open it.'

Before the words were rightly shaped in his own mind, a voice in his ear said to him,

'Search for the key on the top of the door, or on the wall.'

He started. 'Who is that speaking to me?' he cried, turning round; but he saw no one. The voice said in his ear again,

'Search for the key on the top of the door, or on the wall.'

'What's that?' said he, and the sweat running from his forehead; 'who spoke to me?'

'It's I, the corpse, that spoke to you! ' said the voice.

'Can you talk?' said Teig.

'Now and again,' said the corpse.

Teig searched for the key, and he found it on the top of the wall. He was too much frightened to say any more, but he opened the door wide, and as quickly as he could, and he went in, with the corpse on his back.

It was as dark as pitch inside, and poor Teig began to shake and tremble.

'Light the candle,' said the corpse.

Teig put his hand in his pocket, as well as he was able and drew out a flint and steel. He struck a spark out of it, and lit a burnt rag he had in his pocket. He blew it until it made a flame, and he looked round him. The church was very ancient, and part of the wall was broken down. The windows were blown in or cracked, and the timber of the seats was rotten. There were six or seven old iron candlesticks left there still, and in one of these candlesticks Teig found the stump of an old candle, and he lit it. He was still looking round him on the strange and horrid place in which he found himself, when the cold corpse whispered in his ear,

'Bury me now, bury me now; there is a spade and turn the ground.'

Teig looked from him, and he saw a spade lying beside the altar. He took it up, and he placed the blade under a flag that was in the middle of the aisle, and leaning all his weight on the handle of the spade, he raised it. When the first flag was raised it was not hard to raise the others near it, and he moved three or four of them out of their places. The clay that was under them was soft and easy to dig, but he had not thrown up more than three or four shovelfuls, when he felt the iron touch something soft like flesh. He threw up three or more shovelfuls from around it, and then he saw that it was another body that was buried in the same place.

'I am afraid I'll never be allowed to bury the two bodies in the same hole,' said Teig, in his own mind. 'You corpse, there on my back,' says he, 'will you be satisfied if I bury you down here?'

But the corpse never answered him a word.

'That's a good sign,' said Teig to himself, 'Maybe he's getting quiet,' and he thrust the spade down in the earth again. Perhaps he hurt the flesh of the other body, for the dead man that was buried there stood up in the grave, and shouted an awful shout,

'Hoo! Hoo! Hoo! ! ! Go! Go! Go! ! ! Or you're a dead, dead, dead man! '

And then he fell back in the grave again. Teig said afterwards, that of all the wonderful things he saw that night, that was the most awful to him. His hair stood upright on his head like the bristles of a pig, the cold sweat ran off his face, and then came a tremour over all his bones, until he thought that he must fall.

But after a while he became bolder, when he saw that the second corpse remained lying quietly there, and he threw the clay on it again, and he smoothed it overhead, and he laid down the flags carefully as they had been before.

'It can't be that he'll rise up any more,' said he.

He went down the aisle a little further, and drew near to the door, and began raising the flags again, looking for another bed for the corpse on his back. He took up three or four flags and put them aside, and then he dug the clay. He was not long digging until he laid bare an old woman without a thread upon her but her shirt. She was more lively than the first corpse, for he had scarcely taken any of the clay away from about her, when she sat up and began to cry,

'Ho, you *bodach*! Ha, you *bodach*! Where has he been that he got no bed?'

Poor Teig drew back, and when she found that she was getting no answer, she closed her eyes gently, lost her vigour, and fell back quietly and slowly under the clay. Teig did to her as he had done to the man—he threw the clay back on her, and left the flags down overhead.

He began digging again near the door, but before he had thrown up more than a couple of shovelfuls, he noticed a man's hand laid bare by the spade.

'By my soul, I'll go no further, then,' said he to himself; 'what use is it for me?'

And he threw the clay in again on it, and settled the flags as they had been before.

He left the church then, and his heart was heavy enough, but he shut the door and locked it, and left the key where he found it. He sat down on a tombstone that was near the door, and began thinking. He was in great doubt what he should do. He laid his face

between his two hands, and cried for grief and fatigue, since he was dead certain at this time that he never would come home alive. He made another attempt to loosen the hands of the corpse that were squeezed round his neck, but they were as tight as if they were clamped; and the more he tried to loosen them, the tighter they squeezed him. He was going to sit down once more, when the cold, horrid lips of the dead man said to him,

'Bury me in the burying-ground.'

And the corpse stretched out suddenly its left hand that had been tightened round his neck, and kept it pointing out, showing him the road he ought to follow. Teig went in the direction that the fingers were stretched, and passed through the churchyard.

At last the corpse spoke again,

'Bury me there.'

As Teig was turning round and searching, he suddenly perceived what startled him greatly—a newly-dug grave right before him. He moved over to it, and looked down, and there at the bottom he saw a black coffin. He clambered down into the hole and lifted the lid, and found that the coffin was empty. He had hardly mounted up out of the hole, and was standing on the brink, when the corpse, which had clung to him for more than eight hours, suddenly relaxed its hold of his neck, and loosened its shins from round his hips, and sank down with a plop into the open coffin.

Teig fell down on his two knees at the brink of the grave, and gave thanks to God. He made no delay then, but pressed down the coffin lid in its place, and threw in the clay over it with his two hands; and when the grave was filled up, he stamped and leaped on it with his feet, until it was firm and hard, and then he left the place.

The sun was fast rising as he finished his work, and the first thing he did was to return to the road, and look out for a house to rest himself in. He found an inn at last, and lay down upon a bed there, and slept till night. Then he rose up and ate a little, and fell asleep again till morning. When he awoke in the morning he hired a horse and rode home. He was more than

twenty-six miles from home where he was, and he ha come all that way with the dead body on his back i one night.

All the people at his own home thought that h must have left the country, and they rejoiced greatl when they saw him come back. Everyone began askin him where he had been, but he would not tell anyon except his father.

He was a changed man from that day. He neve drank too much; he never lost his money over cards and especially he would not take the world and be ou late by himself of a dark night.

He was not a fortnight home until he took a wife and it's at their wedding the sport was, and it's he wa the happy man from that day forward, and it's all wish that we may be as happy as he was.

THE WHITE TROUT

THERE was wans upon a time, lon ago, a beautifi lady that lived in castle upon th lake beyant, and they say she was promised to a king son, and they wor to be married, when all of a sudde he was murthered, the crathur (Lord help us), an threwn into the lake above, and so, of course, h couldn't keep his promise to the fair lady—and more the pity.

Well, the story goes that she went out iv her mind

bekase av loosin' the king's son—for she was tendher-hearted, God help her, like the rest iv us! And she pined away after him, until at last, no one about seen her, good or bad; and the story wint that the fairies took her away.

Well, Sir, in coorse o' time, the White Throut, God bless it, was seen in the sthrame beyant, and sure the people didn't know what to think av the crathur, seein' as how a *white* throut was never heard av afor, nor since; and years upon years the throut was there, just where you seen it this blessed minit, longer nor I can tell—aye throth, and beyant the memory o'th'ouldest in the village.

At last the people began to think it must be a fairy; for what else could it be? And no hurt nor harm was iver put an the white throut, until some wicked sinners of sojers kem to these parts, and laughed at all the people, and gibed and jeered them for thinkin' o' the likes; and one o' them in partic'lar (bad luck to him; God forgi' me for saying it!) swore he'd catch the throut and ate it for his dinner!

Well, what would you think o' the villainy of the sojer? Sure enough he cotch the throut, and away wid him home, and puts an the fryin'-pan, and into it he pitches the purty little thing. The throut squeeled all as one as a Christian crathur, and, my dear, you'd think the sojer id split his sides laughin'—for he was a harden'd villain; and when he thought one side was done, he turns it over to fry the other; and, what would you think, but the divil a taste of a burn was an it at all at all; and sure the sojer thought it was a quare throut that could not be briled.

'But,' says he, 'I'll give it another turn by-and-by,' little thinkin' what was in store for him, the haythen.

Well, when he thought that side was done he turns it agin, and lo and behould you, the divil a taste more done that side was nor the other.

'Bad luck to me,' says the sojer, 'but that bates the world,' says he; 'but I'll thry you agin, my darlint,' says he, 'as cunnin' as you think yourself.'

And so with that he turns it over and over, but not a sign of the fire was on the purty throut.

'Well,' says the desperate villain (for sure, Sir, only he was a desperate villain *entirely*, he might know he was doing a wrong thing, seein' that all his endeavours was no good)—'Well,' says he, 'my jolly little throut, maybe you're fried enough, though you don't seem over well dress'd; but you may be better than you look, like a singed cat, and a tit-bit afther all,' says he.

And with that he ups with his knife and fork to taste a peace o' the throut; but, my jew'l, the minit he puts his knife into the fish, there was a murtherin' screech, that you'd think the life id lave you if you hurd it, and away jumps the throut out av the fryin'-pan into the middle o' the flure; and an the spot where it fell, up riz a lovely lady—the beautifullest crathur that eyes ever seen, dressed in white, and a band o' goold in her hair, and a'sthrame o' blood runnin' down her arm.

'Look where you cut me, you villain,' says she, and she held out her arm to him—and, my dear, he thought the sight id lave his eyes.

'Couldn't you lave me cool and comfortable in the river where you snared me, and not disturb me in my duty?' says she.

Well, he thrimbled like a dog in a wet sack, and at last he stammered out somethin', and begged for his life, and ax'd her ladyship's pardin, and said he didn't know she was on duty, or he was too good a sojer not to know betther not to meddle wid her.

'I *was* on duty, then,' says the lady; 'I was watchin' for my true love that is comin' by wather to me,' says she, 'an' if he comes while I'm away, an' that I miss iv him, I'll turn you into a pinkeen, and I'll hunt you up and down for overmire, while grass grows or wather runs.'

Well, the sojer thought the life id lave him, at the thoughts iv his bein' turned into a pinkeen, and begged for mercy; and with that says the lady,

'Renounce your evil coorses,' says she, 'you villain, or you'll repint it too late; be a good man for the futhur, and go to your duty reg'lar, and now,' says she, 'take me back and put me into the river again, where you found me.'

'Oh, my lady,' says the sojer, 'how could I have the heart to drownd a beautiful lady like you?'

But before he could say another word, the lady was vanished, and there he saw the little throut an the ground. Well, he put it in a clean plate, and away he runs for the bare life, for fear her lover would come while she was away; and he run, and he run, even till he came to the cave agin, and threw the throut into the river. The minit he did, the wather was as red as blood for a little while, by rayson av the cut, I suppose, until the sthrame washed the stain away; and to this day there's a little red mark on the throut's side, where it was cut.

Well, Sir, from that day out the sojer was an altered man, and reformed his ways, and went to his duty reg'lar, and fasted three times a-week—though it was never fish he tuk an fastin' days, for afther the fright he got, fish id never rest an his stomach—savin' your presence.

But anyhow, he was an altered man, as I said before, and in coorse o' time he left the army, and turned hermit at last; and they say he used to pray evermore for the sould of the White Throut.

THE SERVANT BOY AND THE FARMER

ONG ago, and a long time it was. If I were there then, I wouldn't be there now. If I were there then and now, I would have a new story or an old story, or I would have no story at all.

In any case, however well off I am tonight, may ye not be half so well off tomorrow night.

Well, the sons and daughters of some of the smaller farmers and the labourers around here used to go down the County Limerick working as servant boys and servant girls, and the ones that had the luck to fall in with a good master and mistress were all right, but you would pity some of the poor creatures that had to put up with people that treated them badly. A lot of the big farmers down the County Limerick and over in Tipperary would grudge the bite going into your mouth and they used to try to make the hardest bargain they could with the boys and the girls that went to the hiring fairs in Newcastle and Kilmallock and the rest of the places.

Well, there was a widow woman living in this parish long ago, and she had an only son. And this spring he said that he would go away for the year to earn a few pounds for his mother, and off he went to the hiring fair in Newcastle West. He was not long standing in the square when a farmer from the east of the county came up to him and started to make a bargain. The farmer said that he would give him twice the wages that any other farmer would offer, and that he could be off home with his pay the first time they heard the cuckoo that year, but that if one of them vexed the other one in any way, the bargain was finished between them, and the one that got angry with the other would have to get twelve lashes of the whip on the back.

Well, the boy was a quiet, patient fellow, and the wages seemed big to him, and he was saying to himself that it couldn't be so bad, and maybe it was how the farmer was making fun of him and not serious at all, and so he fixed up the bargain with the farmer, and away home to the house with them.

It was a very good spring, and the work was going very well. And the boy was a great worker, and any other farmer would be very glad to have him. But this farmer was watching him all the time and thinking how he could cheat him out of the few pounds wages, and bad and all as he was, his wife was ten times worse

for all kinds of meanness and miserliness, and it would be hard to pick between the two of them for tricks and roguery. And they treated the boy well enough at first, to get as much work as they could out of him, but when the spring work was nearly getting finished, they began to torment him, trying to get him angry so that he would lose the bargain, between the worst of food and calling him in the middle of the night and having him slaving away in the rain and every other dirty job they could think of.

Now the farmer had a lot of young calves that were very much inclined to stray, and many is the time the poor boy was ordered out to find them, and warned that he would not get a bite to eat until they were all back in the paddock, and many is the hungry day he spent following them through the country. Well, this day the farmer went out early and hid the calves in the cowhouse and then he ordered the boy to look for them, and that he would not get his breakfast until he had them found.

'Where will I look for them, Sir?' says the boy.

'You will search the likely and the unlikely, high and low, until they are found,' says the farmer.

It was not long until the farmer heard a most frightful clatter, and out with him into the haggard, and he found the haybarn levelled and the boy pelting the hay and the sheaves of oats this way and that, into the muck and the water.

'What the devil are you doing, boy?' says he, letting a roar out of him.

'It is how I am searching high and low, the likely place and the unlikely,' says the boy, 'and, sure it is not how you are angry with me?'

The farmer thought of himself, 'I am not, nor vexed. And go in and eat your breakfast,' says he.

The next day the farmer put him minding the calves again.

'You'll drive them across the river,' says he, 'and take care for fear you would get their feet wet. For if as much as one of their feet gets wet you'll be sore and sorry,' says he.

Down to the river with the boy, driving the calves.

And he caught one of them and turned it upside down and dragged it across the river keeping the feet up out of the water, and when the head was down under the water the calf was drowned, and so on with all the other calves. Back with the boy to the master.

'They are across, Sir,' says he, 'and I held the feet up and they are grand and dry. But maybe it was how the water was not so good for their heads,' says he.

Down with the master and there were all the calves laid out dead.

'Are you angry with me, Sir?' says the boy.

The farmer thought of himself, 'I am not, nor vexed. And you can go in to your breakfast.'

The next day was the worst day of rain that was seen for many a long year. 'We have you now,' says the farmer's wife to herself. She called the boy out of his bed. 'I'm in dread that my garden of cabbage will be robbed on me,' says she, 'and you go out now and don't leave off watching it until nightfall. And you are to keep an eye on every single head of cabbage in that garden, or it is you that will be sore and sorry,' says she.

Away out with the boy, without his breakfast, and the rain down on top of him in floods. It was not long until he was back again. And the pair inside gave under him with abuse.

'Didn't I tell you to keep an eye on the cabbage?' says the woman.

'Faith and sure, you did, ma'am,' says he, 'and isn't that what I'm after doing? I have an eye on every single head in the garden,' says he, sitting down to the table and starting to butter a big cut of bread for himself.

Out with the farmer and his wife. And the first thing they saw was every cock and hen and duck and drake and goose and gander in the place laid out dead and the eyes picked out of the head of every one of them. Over with the farmer to the paddock where he had the sheep. It was the same story, every one of them stiff, and the eyes gone out of them. Down with them to the garden, and there was an eye of one of the fowl or the sheep laid on top of every head of cabbage. The farmer was fit to be tied, but the wife calmed him.

'It is bad enough to lose the wages,' says she, 'but what about the lashes of the whip?'

'It is true for you,' says he, 'and what will we do to get rid of him before he has us beggared?'

'Wait until he goes out to the field again,' says she, 'and then I will go and hide under the hedge and make a noise like the cuckoo,' says she.

And in with her in hide under the hedge.

'Come on, boy,' says the farmer, 'the day is going on us, and the ploughing is to be finished.'

'Aren't you angry about the eyes, Sir?' says he.

'I am not, nor vexed,' says the farmer.

They started to plough the field, and it was not long until they heard every 'cuckoo, cuckoo' out of the hedge.

'There is the cuckoo. Isn't he early this year?' says the farmer. 'And I suppose you will be making off home now?' says he.

'Faith and I will not,' says the boy. 'Go along out of that, cuckoo,' says he, 'until I finish the ploughing for this decent man! '

And with that he rises a big lump of a stone out of the ground and lets it fly at the place where the cuckoo was sounding. I tell you the song stopped in a hurry. Over with the farmer, and there was the old woman, stretched out stiff on the ground, nearly dead. The farmer let out a screech and the neighbours came and lifted her into the house and sent for the priest and the doctor.

'It isn't how you are angry with me, Sir?' says the boy.

'Angry, is it?' says he. 'And why wouldn't I be angry with you, you devil, and you having me nearly beggared and my wife nearly killed. I'm more angry than I ever was in my life before.'

That was it, the bargain was broken. And the farmer had to pay him out his wages and then strip down. And I tell you the boy knocked satisfaction out of him for all he had suffered.

LUSMORE THE HUMPBACK

THERE was once a poor man who lived in the fertile glen of Aherlow, at the foot of the gloomy Galtee mountains, and he had a great hump on his back: he looked just as if his body had been rolled up and placed upon his shoulders; and his head was pressed down with the weight so much that his chin, when he was sitting, used to rest upon his knees for support. The country people were rather shy of meeting him in any lonesome place, for though, poor creature, he was as harmless and as inoffensive as a new-born infant, yet his deformity was so great that he scarcely appeared to be a human creature, and some ill-minded persons had set strange stories about him afloat. He was said to have a great knowledge of herbs and charms; but certain it was that he had a mighty skilful hand in plaiting straws and rushes into hats and baskets, which was the way he made his livelihood.

Lusmore, for that was the nickname put upon him by reason of his always wearing a sprig of the fairy cap, or foxglove, in his little straw hat, would ever get a higher penny for his plaited work than any one else, and perhaps that was the reason why some one, out of envy, had circulated the strange stories about him. Be that as it may, it happened that he was returning one evening from the pretty town of Cahir towards Cappagh, and as little Lusmore walked very slowly, on

account of the great hump upon his back, it was quite dark when he came to the old moat of Knockgrafton, which stood on the right-hand side of the road. Tired and weary was he, and noways comfortable in his own mind at thinking how much farther he had to travel, and that he should be walking all the night; so he sat down under the moat to rest himself, and began looking mournfully enough upon the moon which–

> 'Rising in clouded majesty, at length
> Apparent Queen, unveil'd her peerless light,
> And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.'

Presently there rose a wild strain of unearthly melody upon the ear of little Lusmore; he listened, and he thought that he had never heard such ravishing music before. It was like the sound of many voices, each mingling and blending with the other so strangely that they seemed to be one, though all singing different strains, and the words of the song were these–

> Da Luan, Da Mort,
> Da Luan, Da Mort,
> Da Luan, Da Mort;

when there would be a moment's pause, and then the round of melody went on again.

Lusmore listened attentively, scarcely drawing his breath lest he might lose the slightest note. He now plainly perceived that the singing was within the moat; and though at first it had charmed him so much, he began to get tired of hearing the same round sung over and over so often without any change; so availing himself of the pause when Da Luan, Da Mort, had been sung three times, he took up the tune, and raised it with the words

> Augus Da Dardeen

and then went on singing with the voices inside of the moat, Da Luan, Da Mort, finishing the melody, when the pause came again, with augus Da Dardeen.

The fairies within Knockgrafton, for the song was a fairy melody, when they heard this addition to the tune, were so much delighted that, with instant resolve, it was determined to bring the mortal among them, whose musical skill so far exceeded theirs, and little Lusmore was conveyed into their company with the eddying speed of a whirlwind.

Glorious to behold was the sight that burst upon him as he came down through the moat, twirling round and round, with the lightness of a straw, to the sweetest music that kept time to his motion. The greatest honour was then paid him, for he was put above all the musicians, and he had servants tending upon him, and everything to his heart's content, and a hearty welcome to all; and, in short, he was made as much of as if he had been the first man in the land.

Presently Lusmore saw a great consultation going forward among the fairies, and, notwithstanding all their civility, he felt very much frightened, until one stepping out from the rest came up to him and said these words—

'Lusmore, Lusmore,
Doubt not, nor deplore,
For the hump which you bore
On your back is no more;
Look down on the floor,
And view it, Lusmore.'

When these words were said, poor little Lusmore felt himself so light, and so happy, that he thought he could have bounded at one jump over the moon, like the cow in the history of the cat and the fiddle; and he saw, with inexpressible pleasure, his hump tumble down upon the ground from his shoulders. He then tried to lift up his head, and he did so with becoming caution, fearing that he might knock it against the ceiling of the grand hall, where he was; he looked round and round again with the greatest wonder and delight upon everything, which appeared more and more beautiful; and, overpowered at beholding such a

resplendent scene, his head grew dizzy, and his eyesight became dim. At last he fell into a sound sleep, and when he awoke he found that it was broad daylight, the sun shining brightly, and the birds singing sweetly; and that he was lying just at the foot of the moat of Knockgrafton, with the cows and sheep grazing peaceably round about him.

The first thing Lusmore did, after saying his prayers, was to put his hand behind to feel for his hump, but no sign of one was there on his back, and he looked at himself with great pride, for he had now become a well-shaped dapper little fellow, and more than that, found himself in a full suit of new clothes, which he concluded the fairies had made for him.

Towards Cappagh he went, stepping out as lightly, and springing up at every step as if he had been all his life a dancing master. Not a creature who met Lusmore knew him without his hump, and he had a great work to persuade every one that he was the same man—in truth he was not, so far as the outward appearance went.

Of course it was not long before the story of Lusmore's hump got about, and a great wonder was made of it. Through the country, for miles round, it was the talk of every one, high and low.

One morning, as Lusmore was sitting contented enough at his cabin door, up came an old woman to him, and asked him if he could direct her to Cappagh.

'I need give you no directions, my good woman,' said Lusmore, 'for this is Cappagh; and whom may you want here?'

'I have come,' said the woman, 'out of Decie's country, in the county of Waterford, looking after one Lusmore, who, I have heard tell, had his hump taken off by the fairies; for there is a son of a gossip of mine who has got a hump on him that will be his death; and maybe, if he could use the same charm as Lusmore, the hump may be taken off him. And now I have told you the reason of my coming so far: 'tis to find out about this charm, if I can.'

Lusmore, who was ever a good-natured little fellow, told the woman all the particulars, how he had raised

the tune for the fairies at Knockgrafton, how his hump had been removed from his shoulders, and how he had got a new suit of clothes into the bargain.

The woman thanked him very much, and then went away quite happy and easy in her own mind. When she came back to her gossip's house, in the county of Waterford, she told her everything that Lusmore had said, and they put the little hump-backed man, who was a peevish and cunning creature from his birth, upon a car, and took him all the way across the country. It was a long journey, but they did not care for that, so the hump was taken from off him; and they brought him, just at nightfall, and left him under the old moat of Knockgrafton.

Jack Madden, for that was the humpy man's name, had not been sitting there long when he heard the tune going on within the moat much sweeter than before; for the fairies were singing it the way Lusmore had settled their music for them, and the song was going on:

Da Luan, Da Mort,
Da Luan, Da Mort,
Da Luan, Da Mort,
Augus Da Dardeen

without ever stopping. Jack Madden, who was in a great hurry to get quit of his hump, never thought of waiting until the fairies had done, or watching for a fit opportunity to raise the tune higher again than Lusmore had; so having heard them sing it over seven times without stopping, out he bawls, never minding the time or the humour of the tune, or how he could bring his words in properly,

Augus Da Dardeen,
Augus Da Hena

thinking that if one day was good, two were better; and that if Lusmore had one new suit of clothes given him, he should have two.

No sooner had the words passed his lips than he was taken up and whisked into the moat with prodigious force; and the fairies came crowding round about him with great anger, screeching and screaming, and roaring out,

'Who spoiled our tune? Who spoiled our tune?'

And one stepped up to him above all the rest, and said,

'Jack Madden, Jack Madden,
Your words came so bad in
The tune we felt glad in;
This castle you're had in,
That your life we may sadden;
Here's two humps for Jack Madden! '

And twenty of the strongest fairies brought Lusmore's hump, and put it down upon poor Jack's back, over his own, where it became fixed as firmly as if it was nailed on with twelve-penny nails, by the best carpenter that ever drove one.

Out of their castle they then kicked him; and in the morning, when Jack Madden's mother and her gossip came to look after their little man, they found him half dead, lying at the foot of the moat, with the other hump upon his back. Well, to be sure, how they did look at each other! But they were afraid to say anything, lest a hump might be put upon their own shoulders. Home they brought the unlucky Jack Madden with them, as downcast in their hearts and their looks as ever two gossips were; and what through the weight of his other hump, and the long journey, he died soon after, leaving, they say, his heavy curse to anyone who would go to listen to fairy tunes again.

TOM FITZPATRICK AND THE LEPRECHAUN

OLIVER Tom Fitzpatrick was the eldest son o' a comfortable farmer, who lived nigh hand to Marristown-Lattin, not far from the Liffey. Tom was jist turned o' nine-an'-twinty, whin he met wid the follyin' advinthur, an' he was as cliver, clane, tight, good-lukin' a boy as any in the whole county Kildare.

One fine day in harvist, Tom was takin' a ramble by himsilf thro' the land, an' wint sauntherin' along the sunny side uv a hidge, an' thinkin' in himsilf, whare id be the grate harm if people, instid uv idlin' an' goin' about doin' nothin' at all, war to shake out the hay, an' bind and stook th' oats that was lyin' an the ledge, 'specially as the weather was raither brokin uv late, whin all uv a suddint he h'ard a clackin' sort o' n'ise jist a little way fornint him, in the hidge.

'Dear me,' said Tom, 'but isn't it now raaly surprisin' to hear the stonechatters singin' so late in the saison.'

So Tom stole an, goin' on the tips o' his toes to thry iv he cud git a sight o' what was makin' the n'ise, to see iv he was right in his guess.

The n'ise stopt, but as Tom luked sharp thro' the bushes, what did he see in a neuk o' the hidge but a brown pitcher that might hould about a gallon an' a haff o' liquor; an' bye and bye he seen a little wee deeny-dawny bit iv an ould man, wid a little motty iv a cocked hat stuck an the top iv his head, an' a deeshy-daushy leather apron hangin' down afore him, an' he

pulled out a little wooden stool, an' stud up upon it, and dipped a little piggen into the pitcher, an' tuk out the full av it, an' put it beside the stool, an' thin sot down undher the pitcher, an' begun to work at puttin' a heelpiece an a bit iv a brogue jist fittin' fur himsilf.

'Well, by the powers! ' said Tom to himsilf, 'I aften hard tell o' the Leprechauns, an', to tell God's thruth, I nivir rightly believed in thim, but here's won o' thim in right airnest; if I go knowin'ly to work, I'm a med man. They say a body must nivir take their eyes aff o' thim, or they'll escape.'

Tom now stole an a little farther, wid his eyes fixed an the little man jist as a cat does wid a mouse, or, as we read in books, the rattlesnake does wid the birds he wants to inchant. So, whin he got up quite close to him,

'God bless your work, honest man,' sez Tom.

The little man raised up his head, an',

'Thank you kindly,' sez he.

'I wundher you'd be workin' an the holiday,' sez Tom.

'That's my own business, an' none of your's,' was the reply, short enough.

'Well, may be, thin, you'd be civil enough to tell us what you've got in the pitcher there,' sez Tom.

'Aye, will I, wid pleasure,' sez he, 'it's good beer.'

'Beer! ' sez Tom. 'Blud an' turf, man, whare did ye git it?'

'Whare did I git it, is it? Why I med it to be shure; an' what do ye think I med it av?'

'Divil a one o' me knows,' sez Tom, 'but av malt, I 'spose; what ilse?'

''Tis there you're out; I med it av haith.'

'Av haith! ' sez Tom, burstin' out laughin'. 'Shure you don't take me to be sich an omedhaun as to b'lieve that?'

'Do as ye plase,' sez he, 'but what I tell ye is the raal thruth. Did ye nivir hear tell o' the Danes?'

'To be shure I did,' sez Tom, 'warn't thim the chaps we gev such a lickin' whin they thought to take Derry frum huz?'

'Hem,' sez the little man dhryly, 'is that all ye know

about the matther? Why, whin thim Danes war here they taught huz to make beer out o' the haith, an' the saicret's in my family ivir sense.'

'Will ye giv a body a taste o' yer beer to thry?' sez Tom.

'I'll tell ye what it is, young man, it id be fitther fur ye to be lukin' afther yer father's propirty thi'n to be botherin' dacint, quite people wid yer foolish questions. There, now, while you're idlin' away yer time here, there's the cows hav' bruk into th' oats, an' are knockin' the corn all about.'

Tom was taken so by surprise wid this, that he was jist an the very point o' turnin' round, whin he recollicted himsilf. So, afeard that the like might happin agin, he med a grab at the Leprechaun, an' cotch him up in his hand, but in his hurry he ovirset the pitcher, and spilt all the beer, so that he couldn't git a taste uv it to tell what sort it was. He thin swore what he wouldn't do to him iv he didn't show him whare his money was. Tom luked so wicked, an' so bloody-minded, that the little man was quite frightened.

'So,' sez he, 'come along wid me a couple o' fields aff, an' I'll show ye a crock o' gould.'

So they wint, an' Tom held the Leprechaun fast in his hand, an' nivir tuk his eyes frum aff uv him, though they had to crass hidges an' ditches, an' a cruked bit uv a bog (fur the Leprechaun seemed, out o' pure mischief, to pick out the hardest and most conthrairy way), till at last they come to a grate field all full o' *bolyawn buies*, yellow ragweed, an' the Leprechaun pointed to a big bolyawn, an' sez he,

'Dig undher that bolyawn, an' you'll git a crock chuck full o' goulden guineas.'

Tom, in his hurry, had nivir minded the bringin' a spade wid him, so he thought to run home and fetch one. an' that he might know the place agin, he tuk aff one o' his red garthers, and tied it round the bolyawn.

'I s'pose,' sez the Leprechaun, very civilly, 'ye've no further occashin fur me?'

'No,' sez Tom, 'ye may go away now. if ye like, and God speed ye, an' may good luck attind ye whareivir ye go.'

'Well, goodbye to ye, Tom Fitzpatrick,' sed the Leprechaun, 'an' much good may do ye wid what ye'll git.'

So Tom run fur the bare life, till he come home, an' got a spade, an' thin away wid him as hard as he could pilt back to the field o' bolyawns; but whin he got there, lo an' behould, not a bolyawn in the field but had a red garther, the very identical model o' his own, tied about it; an' as to diggin' up the whole field, that was all nonsinse, fur there was more nor twinty good Irish acres in it.

So Tom come home agin wid his spade an his shouldher, a little cooler nor he wint; and many's the hearty curse he gev the Leprechaun ivry time he thought o' the nate turn he sarved him.

GypsyTales

MOSSYCOAT

DERE was once a poor ould widdei woman as lived i a little cottage. She' two daughters; de younge on 'em was about ninetee or twenty, and she wa very beautiful. Her mothe was busy ivry day, a-spin ning of a coat for her A pedlar came courting di girl; came reg'lar he did, and kept on a-bringing of he dis thing and dat. He was in love wid her, and badly wanted her to marry him. But she wasn't in love wi him; it didn't fall out like dat; and she was in a puzzle ment what she'd best do about him. So one day sh ext her mother.

'Let he come,' her mother telt her, 'and git wha you can out'n him, while I finish dis coat, after wher you won't have no need 'n him, nor his present neether. So tell him, girl, as you won't marry him, un less he gits you a dress o' white satin with sprigs o goold on it as big as a man's hand; and mind as you tells him it mus' fit exac'ly.'

Next time de pedlar cam round, and ext her to wed him, de girl telt him just dis, de wery same as her mother'd said. He took stock 'n her size and build, dc pedlar did; and inside of a week he was back wid dc dress. It answered de describance all right, an when de girl went upstairs wid her mother, and tried it on, it fit 'n exac'ly.

'What should I do now, Mother?' she ext.

'Tell him,' her mother says, 'as you won't marry him unless he gits you a dress med o' silk de color o' all de birds o' de air; and as afore, it must fit you exac'ly.'

De girl telt de pedlar dis, and in two or three days he was back at de cottage, wid dis colored silk dress de girl ed exted for; and being as he knowed de size from de t' other un, in course it fit her exac'ly.

'Now what should I do, Mother?' she ext.

'Tell him,' her mother says, 'as you won't marry him unless he gits you a pair o' silver slippers as fits you exac'ly.'

De girl telt de pedlar so, and in a few days he called round wid 'em. Her feet was only about three inches long, but de slippers fit her exac'ly; dey was not too tight, neether was dey too loose. Agen de girl ext her mother what she should do now.

'I can finish de coat tonight,' her mother said, 'so you can tell de pedlar as you'll marry him tomorrow, and he's to be here at ten o'clock.'

So de girl telt him dis.

'Think-on, my dear,' she says, 'ten o'clock in de morning.'

'I'll be dere, my love,' he says. 'By God, I will.'

That night her mother was at work on de coat till late, but she finished it all right. Green moss and goold thread, dat's what it was med on; just dem two things. 'Mossycoat,' she called it, and give de name to de younger daughter, as she'd med it for. It was a magic coat, she said, a wishing coat, she telt her daughter; when she'd got it on, she telt her she'd only to wish to be somewhere, and she'd be dere dat wery instant, and de same if she wanted to change hersel' into summat else, like to be a swan or a bee.

Next morning de mother was up by it was light. She called her younger daughter, and telt her she mus' now go into de world and seek her fortune, and a handsome fortune it was to be. She was a foreseer, de owld mother was, and know'd what was a-coming. She give her daughter mossycoat to put on, and a goold crown to tek wid her, and she telt her to tek as well de two dresses and de silver slippers she'd had off'n de pedlar.

But she was to go in de clo'es as she wore ivery day, her working clo'es dat is. And now she's ready for to start, Mossycoat is. Her mother den tells her she is to wish herself a hundred miles away, and den walk on till she comes to a big hall, and dere she's to ext for a job.

'And dey'll be sure to find you work at dis big hall.'

Mossycoat did as her mother telt her, and soon she foun' herself in front of a big gentleman's house. She knocked at de front door and said as she was looking for work. Well, de long and de short of it was as de mistress hersel' come to see her; and she liked de look 'n her, de lady did.

'What work can you do?' she ext.

'I can cook, your ladyship,' said Mossycoat. 'In fact, I'm in de way o' being a wery good cook, from what peoples 'es remarked.'

'I can't give you a job as cook.' de lady tells her, 'being as I got one already; but I'd be willing to imply you to help de cook, if so as you'd be satisfied wid dat.'

'Thank you, ma'am,' says Mossycoat. 'I s'd be real glad 'n de place.'

So it was settled as she was to be undercook. And after when de lady'd showed her up to her bedroom, she took her to de kitchen, and interdoosed her to de t'other sarvants.

'Dis is Mossycoat,' she tells 'em, 'and I've ingaged her,' she says, 'to be undercook.'

She leaves 'em den, de mistress does; and Mossycoat she goes up to her bedroom agen, to unpack her things, and hide away her goold crown and silver slippers, and her silk and satin dresses.

It goes wi'out saying as de t'other kitchen girls was fair beside theirsels wid jealousy; and it didn't mend matters as de new girl was a dam' sight beautifuller nor what any of dem was. Here was dis wagrant i' rags put above dem, when all she was fit for was to be scullery girl. If anybody was to be undercook, it stands to sense it sud 'er been one o' dem as really knowed about things, not dis girl i' rags and tatters, picked up off'n de roads. But dey'd put her in her place, dey

would. So dey goes on and on till Mossycoat come down ready to start work. Den dey sets on her.

'Who de devil did she think she was, setting hersel' above dem? She'd be undercook, would she? No dam' fear... dey relow of dat. What she'd hev to do, and all she was fit for, was to scour de pans, clean de knives, do de grates and suchlike; and all she'd git was dis.'

And down come de skimmer on top of her head, pop, pop, pop.

'Dat's what you deserves,' dey tell her, 'and dat's what you can expect, my lady.'

And dat's how it was wid Mossycoat. She was put to do all de dirtiest work, and soon she was up to de ears in grease, and her face as black as soot. And ivery now and agen, first one and then another o' de sarvants 'ld pop, pop, pop her a-top o' de head wid de skimmer, till de poor girl's head was dat sore, she couldn't hardly bide it.

Well, it got on, and it got on, and still Mossycoat was at her pans, and knives, and grates; and still de sarvants was pop, pop, popping her on de head wid de skimmer. Now dere was a big dance coming on, as was to last three nights, wid hunting and other sports in de daytime. All de headmost people for miles round was to be dere; and de master, and mistress, and de young master—dey'd niver had but one child—in course dey was a-going. It was all de talk among de sarvants, dis dance was.

One was wishing she could be dere; another 'd like to dance wid some 'n de young lords; a third 'ld like to see de ladies' dresses, and so dey went on, all excepting Mossycoat. If only dey'd de clo'es, dey'd be al right, dey thought, as dey considered deirselves as good as high-titled ladies any day.

'And you, Mossycoat, you'd like to go, wouldn't you now?' dey says. 'A fit person you'd be to be dere in all your rags and dirt,' dey says, and down comes de skimmer on her head, pop, pop, pop.

Den dey laughs at her; which goes to show what a low class o' people dey was.

Now Mossycoat, as I've said afore, was wery handsome, and rags and dirt couldn't hide dat. De t'other

sarvants might think as it did, but de young master'd hed his eyes on her, and de master and mistress, dey'd al'ays taken partic'lar notice o' her, on account of her good looks. When de big dance was coming on, dey thought as it'd be nice to ex her to go to it; so dey sent for her to see if she'd like to.

'No, thank you,' she says. 'I've niver think o' such a thing. I knows my place better'n dat,' she says. 'Besides, I'd greasy all de one side o' de coach,' she tells 'em, 'and anybody's clo'es as I comed up agen.'

Dey make light on dat, and presses her to go, de master and mistress does. It's wery kind on 'em, Mossycoat says, but she's not for going, she says. And she sticks to dat. When she gets back into de kitchen, you may depend on it, de t'other sarvants wants to know why she'd bin sent for. Had she got notice, or what was it? So she telt 'em de master and mistress 'ed ext her would she like to go to the dance wid 'em.

'What? You?' dey says, 'it's unbelievable. If it had been one o' we, now, dat'd be different. But you! Why, you'd niver be relowed in, as you'd greasy all the gentlemen's clo'es, if dere were any as 'ed dance wid a scullery girl; and de ladies, dey'd be forced to howld dere noses w'en dey passed by you, to be sure dey would.'

No, dey couldn't believe, dey said, as de master and mistress had iver ext *her* to go to de ball wid 'em. She must be lying, dey said, and down come de skimmer a-top of her head, pop, pop, pop.

Next night, de master and de mistress and dere son, dis time, ext her to go to de dance. It was a grand affair de night before, dey said, and she sud ev bin dere. It was going to be still grander tonight, dey said, and dey begged of her to come wid 'em, especially de young master. But no, she says, on account of her rags and her grease, and dirt, she couldn't, and she wouldn't; and even de young master couldn't persuade her, though it wasn't for de want o' trying. The t' other sarvants just didn't believe her when she telt 'em about her being invited agen to de dance, and about de young master being wery pressing.

'Hark to her! ' they says. 'What'll de upstart say next? And all dam' lies,' dey says.

Den one o' dem, wid a mouth like a pig-trough, and legs like a cart-horse, catches hold o' de skimmer, and down it comes, pop, pop, pop, on Mossycoat's head.

Dat night, Mossycoat decided as she'd go to de dance, in right proper style, all on her own, and wi'out nobody knowing it. De first thing she does is to put all de t'other sarvants into a trance; she just touches each on 'em, unnoticed, as she moves about, and dey all falls asleep under a spell as soon as she does, and can't wake up agen on deir own; de spell has to be broke by somebody wid de power, same as she has through her magic coat, or has got it some other way. Next Mossycoat has a real good wash: she'd niver been relowed to afore, sin' she'd bin at de hall as the other sarvants was retermined to mek and to keep her as greasy and dirty as dey could. Den she goes upstairs to her bedroom, throws off her working clo'es and shoes, and puts on her white satin dress wid de gowld sprigs, her silver slippers, and her gowld crown. In course, she had mossycoat on underneath. So as soon as she was ready, she jus' wished hersel' at de dance, and dere she was, as soon as de wish was spoke. She did jus' feel hersel' rising up and flying through de elements but only for a moment. Den she was in de ballroom.

De young master sees her standing dere, and once he catched sight on her he can't tek his eyes off her; he'd niver seen anybody as han'some afore, or as beautifully dressed.

'Who is she?' he exes his mother; but she doesn't know, she tells him.

'Can't you find out, Mother?' he says. 'Can't you go and talk to her?'

His mother sees as he'll niver rest till she does, so she goes and interdooses hersel' to de young lady, and exes her who she is, where she comes from, and such as dat; but all she could git out 'n her was as she come from a place where dey hit her on de head wid de skimmer. Den presently, de young master he goes over and interdooses hissel', but she doesn't tell him her name nor

nothing; and when he exes her to hev a dance wid him, she says no, she'd rather not. He stops aside of her though, and keeps exing her time and agen, and at de finish she says as she will, and links up wid him. Dey dances once, up and down de room; den she says she must go. He presses her to stop, but it's a waste o' breath.

Den she wishes hersel' at home, and is dere nearly as soon as she's spoken. De young master felt her rise into de air, but couldn't do nothing to stop her. Bur p'raps he did jus' touch her foot, as she dropped one slipper; I couldn't be sure as he did; it looks a bit like it though.

He picks de slipper up; but as for catching up wid her, it would be easier by far to catch up wid de wind on a blowy night. As soon as she gits home, Mossycoat changes back into her owld things; den she looses de t'other sarvants from de spell she'd put on 'em. Dey've been asleep, dey thinks, and offers her one a shilling, another a half a crown, a third a week's wage, if she won't tell on 'em; and she promises as she won't.

De young master's in bed next day, a-dying for de love of de lady as lost one 'n her silver slippers de night afore. De doctors can't do him de leastest good. So it was give out what his state was, and as it was only de lady able to wear de slipper as could save his life; and if she'd come forrad, he'd marry her. De slippers, as I said earlier on, was only but three inches long, or dereabouts. Ladies came from near and far, some wid big feet and some wid small, but none small enough to git it on howiver much dey pinched and squeezed. Poorer people came as well, but it was jus' de same wid dem. And in course, all de sarvants tried, but dey was out'n altogether. De young master was a-dying. Was dere nobody else, his mother exed, nobody at all, rich or poor?

'No,' dey telt her, everybody's tried it excepting it was Mossycoat.

'Tell her to come at once,' says de mistress.

So dey fetched her.

'Try dis slipper on,' she says–dat's de mistress.

Mossycoat slips her foot into it easy enough; it fits her exac'ly. De young master jumps out o' bed, and is jus' a-going to tek her in his arms.

'Stop,' she says, and runs off; but afore long she's back agen in her satin dress wid gowld sprigs, her gowld crown, and both her silver slippers. De young master is jus' a-going to tek her in his arms.

'Stop,' she says, and agen she runs off. Dis time she comes back in her silk dress de color of all de birds o' de air. She don't stop him dis time, and as de saying used to be, he nearly eats her.

After when dey's all settled down agen, and is talking quiet-like, dere's one or two things as de master and mistress and de young master'ld like to know. How did she git to dance, and back agen, in no time, they exed her.

'Jus' wishing,' she says, and she tells 'em all as I've telt you about the magic coat her mother 'ed med for her, and de powers it give her if she cared to use 'em.

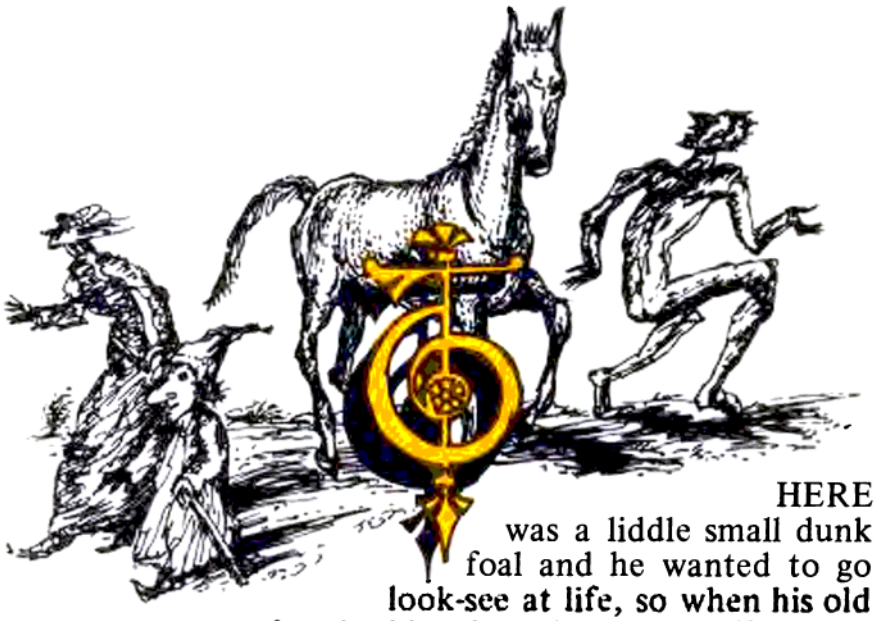
'Yes, dat explains everything,' dey says.

Den dey bethinks theirselves of her saying as she came from where dey hit her on de head wid de skimmer. What did she mean by dat, dey wants to know. She meant jus' what she said, she telt 'em; it was always coming down on her head, pop, pop, pop. They were right angry when dey heard dat, and de whole of de kitchen sarvants was telt to go, and de dogs sent arter dem to drive de varmints right away from de place.

And Mossycoat she followed dem. Dat poor young master; he begged and hollered and threatened, but she'd had enough of de big house and dere ways. She went back to her pedlar and married him. Dey lived happy ever after, and had a basketful o' children.

I was dere when de owld son comed of age, a-playing de fiddle. But dat was many years back, and I shouldn't wonder if de owld woman and pedlar isn't dead by now, though I've niver heerd tell as dey was.

THE LIDDLE DUNK FOAL



HERE was a liddle small dunk foal and he wanted to go look-see at life, so when his old mammy weren't a-looking he trit-trotted off on his wankly liddle legs.

First go off he met an old witch.

'I'll have 'ee!' says she, but when her touch 'n her got burned. 'Drat!' says she, 'Born on a Zunday, I'll be bound! '

'Like all dunks, my mammy d'say,' say the liddle small dunk foal, and he went on along. Then he met Bogey.

'I'll have 'ee! ' say Bogey, but when he grab 'n his fistesses fried. 'Yow! ' say Bogey. 'Yew've a criss-cross on yewr back, keep away vrom me! '

'Like all dunks, my mammy d'say,' say the liddle small dunk foal, and he went on along till he come to a gallitrap.

'Be off out of that! ' say the Pixies. 'Us can't ride 'ee, and now yur yew comes treading in our ring, and yew just seben days old! '

'So was all dunks once, so my mammy d'say', say the liddle small dunk foal.

Then they all says, 'Be off whoame! Quick now! '

So he trit-trotted back to his mammy. And furst she kicked 'n fur gooin' stray and then she gived 'un his dinner.

Приложение

ТЮЛЬПАННЫЕ ЭЛЬФЫ

АЛЕКО на Западе, где-то возле Тэйви, жила когда-то добрая старушка. За ее домиком тянулся луг, где хозяйничали эльфы, и на траве виднелись зеленые круги. Теперь многие люди говорят, что эти волшебные круги появились потому, что эльфы ловили жеребят. Поймают, вскочат на спину и всю ночь гоняют их по кругу. Так говорят люди. Но старушка думала, что на самом-то деле круги эти появились иначе.

Ее чистенький домик стоял в красивом саду, где было полно благоухающих цветов. Там росла лаванда, розы – красные и белые, лилии и розмарин, левкои и гвоздика, незабудки и рута. Но лучше всего была большая клумба тюльпанов, за которой старушка особенно усердно ухаживала. Когда тюльпаны зацветали, прохожие останавливались и заглядывали через калитку, чтобы ими полюбоваться.

Как эльфы любили это место! Им нравилась добрая старушка и нравился ее сад.

Как-то раз в ясную ночь, когда белая сирень расцвела под самым окном, старушку разбудили странные звуки. Сначала она подумала, что ее разбудила сова, что сидит на ветвях вяза. Но когда она вслушалась, то уловила, что звуки были гораздо нежнее, чем хриплые крики совы.

"Ну точь-в-точь колыбельная", – подумала она и еще полежала и послушала.

Затем встала с постели и выглянула в окно. Внизу, освещенные лунным светом, яркие разноцветные тюльпаны покачивали головками в лад с нежной музыкой. Казалось, будто они и сами поют.

Так вот, когда это повторилось на вторую, а затем и на третью ночь, старушка поняла, что происходит. Эльфы приносили своих малюток на тюльпанную клумбу и укладывали каждого в отдельный цветок.

– Они убаюкивают своих малюток, вот что! – сказала старушка, которой это ужасно понравилось. – Шш... Тсс...

Милые мои! Я их вижу! Малютки скоро заснут, и тогда эльфы отправятся плясать на луг.

И она была права. Круги появлялись на траве вовсе не от жеребят, а оттого, что эльфы водили хоровод под музыку своих маленьких волыночников. Но чуть на востоке забрезжит заря, эльфы возвращались, забирали своих малюток из чашечек тюльпанов, где те спали, как в колыбельках, становились невидимками и исчезали.

– Боже мой! Никогда бы не поверила! Эти крошки целуют своих малюток, прежде чем вынуть их из колыбелек! – воскликнула старушка. – Как они их любят! Ну что за милый народ эти эльфы!

Она заметила, что тюльпаны не так скоро вяли, как остальные цветы в ее саду. В самом деле, казалось, что они никогда не засохнут. А один раз, когда она наклонилась над ними и стала их разглядывать, то заметила, что от дыхания эльфов они стали еще прекраснее. Теперь они так же благоухали, как лилии или розы.

– Ни один человек не сорвет ни одного тюльпана, даже я сама, – сказала старушка, – они все останутся для эльфов, чтобы они им радовались.

И так шел год за годом.

Но никто не живет вечно, и в конце концов старушка умерла. Это был печальный день для ее сада, и тюльпаны повесили головки. Им и вправду было отчего горевать, потому что теперь сад перешел в другие руки. Новому хозяину не было никакого дела до эльфов и их цветов. Он ухаживал за садом только потому, что там росли плодовые деревья и кусты, на которых зрели ягоды. Пироги с крыжовником, с малиной, со сливами получаются такими вкусными!

– Вы лучше не собирайте крыжовник до срока, – предупредил его сосед, – а то еще беду накличете. Эльфы не терпят, когда отнимают их добро.

– Эльфы? Чушь! – усмехнулся хозяин.

– Неужто вы выкопаете тюльпаны? – спросил другой сосед. – Старая хозяйка особенно любила эту клумбу. Что вы хотите туда посадить?

– Хочу посадить петрушку, ежели вам угодно знать, – ответил хозяин.

– Петрушку? Господи помилуй! Вы что, не знаете, что это к страшной беде – посадить грядку петрушки? Мне

когда-то рассказывали про человека, который это сделал. И после этого сразу слег, да так и не встал. А больше я ни про кого такого и не слыхивал...

– Чепуха и ерунда, – не поверил новый хозяин.

И вот волшебные цветы были вырваны, а на их место посадили петрушку. Но эльфы так обиделись и рассердились, что она завяла. И не только ничего не росло на тюльпанной клумбе, но и весь сад скоро совсем засох.

И хотя с тюльпанной клумбы больше не слышалось колыбельных песен, но эльфы, что жили по соседству, все же пели. Только теперь пение доносилось с могилы старой женщины. Это была грустная, печальная песня, и каждую ночь перед полнолунием они ее пели.

Никто не следил за могилой старой женщины, но ни один сорняк не пускал тут корней. Когда-то она ухаживала за тюльпанами эльфов, а теперь они ухаживали за ее могилой. И хотя никто не сажал на могиле ни единого цветка, все же по ночам здесь распускались любимые цветы старой женщины: розмарин и левкои, лаванда и незабудки, вдовушка и рута.

Я не знаю, что тут правда, а что наврали,
Я рассказываю сказку, как мне рассказали.

ЧЕРРИ ИЗ ЗЕННОРА

СТАРЫЙ Хани жил с женой и детьми в домике из двух комнат и спаленки в скалистой части Тририна, в Зенноре. Полдюжины детей росло у стариков. Жили как умели землей-кормилицей в несколько акров, но худая была земля, тут и козел боков не нагуляет. Вокруг дома валялось видимо-невидимо ракушек, можно было подумать, что здесь едят одни гребешки да устриц. А между тем была у них в будни рыба с картошкой, а по воскресеньям случалась и свинина с бульоном. И белый

хлеб бывал — на Рождество и на Пасху. Таких здоровых да пригожих детей, как у старого Хани, ни у кого во всей округе не было. Его дочка Черри могла резвостью с зайцем поспорить, на уме одни шалости да проказы.

Приедет, к примеру, в город сын мельника, привяжет лошадь к терновнику и кричит в окно, не надо ли, мол, свезти зерно на мельницу, а Черри прыг на лошадь и во весь опор к скалам. Он за ней в погоню. Только настигнет у края скалистой гряды, а она прыг с лошади и за груду камней — самая проворная собака не догонит, не то что сын мельника.

Стала Черри девушкой, и огорчений у нее прибавилось: который уж год мать обещала ей новое платье, не хуже, чем у других, такое, чтобы в нем, как говорится, и в пир и в мир. Только денег всегда не хватало, и Черри оставалась без хорошего платья. Ни на ярмарке показаться, ни в церкви, ни на гулянии.

Минуло Черри шестнадцать лет. И вот подружка, которой подарили нарядное платье с лентами, давай рассказывать Черри, как она в этом платье ездила на проповедь в Нанкледри и как поклонники наперебой вызывались проводить ее до дома. Неугомонная Черри совсем голову потеряла. Объявила матери, что пойдет в низинный край, в долину Тоуднака и Зеннора, — авось возьмут в услужение, и приоденется она не хуже других девушек.

— Уж тогда в Тоуднак, — сказала мать, — чтобы мы с тобой изредка, по воскресеньям, могли повидаться.

— Вот еще, — сказала Черри, — там корова может сжевать веревку с колокольчиком, а люди едят в будни рыбу с картошкой и пирог с угрем по воскресеньям!

В одно прекрасное утро Черри увязала в узелок свои вещи; вот и в путь пора. Отцу она пообещала наняться в услужение неподалеку от родных мест и домой вернуться при первой возможности. Старик наказал, чтобы она остерегалась моряков и пиратов, и отпустил с богом.

Путь ее лежал на Лудгван и Гульвал. Когда печные трубы Тирина исчезли из виду, вся ее решимость исчезла, хоть назад поворачивай. Но она заставила себя продолжать путь.

А как дошла до скрещенья четырех дорог в Леди Даунз, села на камень и заплакала по дому, который неизвестно когда еще увидит.

Выплакалась она и рассудила, что лучше всего ей сейчас же обратно воротиться.

Утерла она слезы, подняла голову и оторопела: прямо к ней направлялся какой-то джентльмен. И откуда он только взялся, если минуту назад его в помине не было?

Джентльмен вежливо поздоровался, справился о дороге в Тоуднак и спросил, куда Черри путь держит.

Девушка ответила, что нынче утром она ушла из дому в поисках работы, да вот духу не хватило и хочет теперь обратно за холмы, в свой Зеннор.

— Вот так удача, — воскликнул джентльмен. — Я вышел засветло, ищу хорошую опрятную девушку, которая бы вела мое хозяйство, а тут как раз ты навстречу.

Он рассказал Черри, что недавно овдовел и что у него премилый мальчуган, за которым она могла бы присматривать. И что Черри очень даже ему подходит. И собой хороша, и опрятна. Вон как платьице искусно починено, ни единой заплатки не увидишь. А личико — что твоя роза; кожа — морской водой так не отбелишь. Бедняжка Черри на все "да, сэр", а сама и половины не понимает, о чем ей толкуют. Так ее мать учила: разве поймешь священника или благородного господина, так что ты им одно отвечай — "да, сэр". Джентльмен сказал ей, что он живет неподалеку, в низине, что вся ее работа будет корову подоить да за ребенком присмотреть. Черри и согласилась.

Пока они шли, он был так любезен с ней, что она и не заметила, как время пролетело, и сколько прошла, не помнила.

Вот они свернули в аллею, сплошь обсаженную деревьями, редкое пятнышко света метило тропу. Сколько хватало взгляда, только цветы и кроны. Воздух был напоен сладкими запахами шиповника и жимолости, а сверху свисали спелые красные яблоки.

Но вот путь им преградил ручей, прозрачный, как кристалл. Было уже совсем темно, и Черри остановилась, не зная, как ей перейти на тот берег. Джентльмен обхватил ее за талию и перенес, она даже ног не замочила.

Все темней и темней становилась аллея, все у́же и у́же; казалось, она быстро увлекает их к подножию холма. Черри крепко держала джентльмена под руку и думала про себя, что с таким любезным мужчиной можно хоть на край света.

Пройдя еще немного, джентльмен отворил ворота в прекрасный сад и сказал:

– Вот, милая Черри, здесь я живу.

Черри глазам своим не верила. Ничего прекраснее она не видывала. Ее окружали цветы самых разных оттенков, а какие фрукты свисали с веток, а как дружно и весело распевали птицы – нежнее мелодий она в жизни своей не слыхала. Когда-то бабушка рассказывала ей о заколдованных местах. Вдруг это одно из них? Нет, не похоже – джентльмен-то ростом под стать их приходскому священнику. А навстречу ему бежал через сад маленький мальчик с криком:

– Папа! Папа!

Он был совсем кроха, года два-три, но что-то в нем было недетское. Глазенки так и сверкали, а плутоватый взгляд пронизывал насквозь.

– Да ты любого пересмотришь! – сказала Черри.

Не успела она, однако, заговорить с мальчиком, как показалась уродливая высохшая старуха, схватила мальчика за руку и, бормоча какие-то угрозы, утащила его в дом. Но, перед тем как скрыться, старая карга просверлила Черри взглядом, точно буравчиком.

Увидев, что Черри несколько сникла, хозяин объяснил ей, что это бабка его покойной жены, старая и злая, и что ноги ее здесь не будет, как только Черри освоится с работой. Когда Черри вдосталь насмотрелась на сад, ее пригласили в дом, где у нее совсем глаза разбежались. Каких только цветов тут не было, и хотя солнце сюда не проникало, все, казалось, было залито его лучами.

Тетушка Пруденс – так звали старуху – мигом уставила стол всевозможными яствами, и Черри сытно поужинала. Ее проводили наверх, в спальню, где стояли кровати ее и мальчика. Пруденс велела ей держать глаза закрытыми, даже если не будет спаться, не то она может увидеть такое, от чего ей станет не по себе. И никаких по ночам разговоров с малышом. Она должна была встать с рассветом, отвести мальчика в сад, к ключу, умыть его и смазать ему глаза мазью из хрустальной коробочки, спрятанной в расселине, но сама ни под каким видом не пользоваться этой мазью.

Затем надо было покликать корову, надоить ведро молока, а вершки слить в кружку – на завтрак мальчику. Черри сгорала от любопытства. Не раз она приступалась к

малышу с расспросами, но он останавливал ее словами:

– Я все расскажу тетушке Пруденс.

Рано утром, как ей было приказано, Черри встала. Мальчик привел ее к прозрачному, как кристалл, ключу, что бил из гранитной скалы, покрытой плющом и дивным мхом. Малыш был умыт, и глаза его смазаны мазью – все как положено. Правда, коровы нигде не было видно, но ее маленький питомец сказал, что корову обязательно надо покликать.

– Пру, пру, пру! – покликала Черри, как она это делала дома.

Глядь, из-за деревьев выходит красавица корова и останавливается рядом.

Едва успевала Черри прикоснуться к вымени, как ударяла струя молока, так что вскоре ведро было полнехонько. Потом она наполнила кружку, и мальчик все выпил. Когда с этим было покончено, корова неспешно ушла прочь, а Черри вернулась в дом узнать, что ей делать дальше.

Старуха Пруденс накормила ее сытным завтраком и объяснила, что предстоит работа на кухне – вскипятить молоко, сбить масло, отчистить все тарелки и кружки мокрым песком. Ей было велено не совать свой нос куда не надо. Не ходить на другую половину, не дергать запертых дверей.

На второй день, когда Черри переделала обычную работу, хозяин позвал ее в сад помочь собрать яблоки и груши и прополоть репчатый лук и порей.

Черри была рада-радешенька уйти из-под старухиного присмотра. Все время эта Пруденс одним глазом на свое вязание поглядывала, а другим сверлила бедняжку Черри. И ворчала то и дело:

– Так я и знала, что Робин приведет какую-нибудь дурочку из Зеннора, – оно и лучше для обоих, что жена сошла в могилу.

Черри с хозяином отлично работали на пару: когда она заканчивала прополку очередной грядки, довольный хозяин награждал ее поцелуем.

Прошло несколько дней, и вот старуха Пруденс повела Черри на ту половину, которой она до сих пор не видела. Они миновали длинный темный коридор. Черри сняла башмаки, как ей велели, и они вошли в комнату, где пол был

точно стеклянный и на полу, а также на полках, всюду сидели человечки, большие и маленькие, превращенные в камень. Кто с отрубленными руками, одна голова на плечах; кто целый-невредимый.

– Ни за что на свете не пойду дальше, – сказала Черри старухе. В первый миг она подумала, что очутилась в подземной стране, где все лилипуты, кроме хозяина, но потом поняла, что попала к волшебникам, по чьей милости все эти люди окаменели. Ей доводилось слышать в Зеннore рассказы о таких вещах, и она знала, что в любой момент эти человечки могут ожить и съесть ее.

Старуха смеется и подталкивает ее вперед; ну-ка, говорит, потри вон ту коробочку – вон, точно гробик на шести ножках, – потри, пока не увидишь в ней свое лицо. Черри, надо сказать, была не из пугливых, принялась тереть, а старуха знай себе вяжет и приговаривает:

– Три, три, три! Сильнее, быстрее!

Черри уже отчаялась, но тут она из всех сил потерла уголок – и чуть не выронила коробочку. Мать честная! Коробочка издала такой скорбный, потусторонний звук, что казалось, сейчас воскреснут все каменные человечки, и от этой мысли Черри со страху упала в обморок.

Хозяин, услышав шум, пришел узнать, в чем дело. Ох и разгневался же он, что старуха привела Черри в запертую комнату; он прогнал Пруденс из дому, а Черри отнес в кухню, дал ей сердечных капель и привел в чувство.

Черри не помнила, что с ней было, но одно она точно знала: на той половине творится что-то ужасное.

После того как прогнали старуху Пруденс, заправлять всем в доме стала Черри. Хозяин был так добр к ней и заботлив, что год промелькнул, как летний день. Иногда хозяин надолго отлучался, а вернувшись, по многу часов проводил на заколдованной половине; Черри слышала – она была в этом уверена, – как он там разговаривает с каменными человечками.

У Черри было все, что только может душа пожелать, но она не была счастлива. Ей хотелось побольше узнать о доме и его обитателях. Она догадалась, что именно мазь делает глаза мальчика такими странными и блестящими, и теперь Черри часто казалось, что он видит то, чего не видит она. Ей очень хотелось проверить на себе эту мазь, страсть как хотелось!

И вот однажды утром, когда малыш был умыт и его глаза смазаны, а корова подоена, она отослала мальчика в сад нарвать цветов и, взяв на палец толику мази, положила ее в глаз. И как только его не выжгло!

Черри сбежала к пруду у подножья скалы, чтобы промыть горящий глаз, и вдруг... она увидела, как на дне пруда резвится несметное множество человечков, все больше дам, и с ними вместе, такой же кроха, резвился ее хозяин. В одно мгновение для нее все переменилось. Человечки были повсюду: прятались в цветах, переливающихся алмазами, раскачивались на деревьях, бегали и прыгали среди стебельков травы. Весь день хозяин не вылезал из воды, ну а вечером он подскакал к дому — красавец джентльмен, каким она привыкла его видеть. Он прошел в заколдованную комнату, и вскоре до слуха Черри донеслась чудеснейшая музыка.

Утром хозяин отбыл, одетый как для охоты с гончими. Вернулся к ночи и, не обращая на Черри никакого внимания, прошел на свою половину. Так продолжалось день за днем, и наконец Черри не выдержала. Заглянув в замочную скважину, она увидела, как ее хозяин поет с разными дамами, а одна из них, одетая как королева, играет на крышке гроба.

Так случилось, что на следующий день хозяин остался дома собирать фрукты. Черри должна была помогать, и вот, когда он по своему обыкновению хотел поцеловать ее, она ударила его по лицу и сказала: пусть он, дескать, целует человечков вроде себя, тех, с кем он там под водой резвится.

Так он узнал, что Черри воспользовалась мазью.

С грустью он объявил ей, что она должна будет вернуться домой, что он никому не позволит за собой шпионить и что тетушку Пруденс придется пригласить обратно... Задолго до рассвета хозяин вызвал к себе Черри. Он дал ей разные платья и много чего другого, затем взял в одну руку ее узелок, в другую фонарь и попросил следовать за ним.

Они шли милю за милей, все время в гору, по аллеям и узеньким тропкам. Когда наконец они вышли на ровное место, уже почти рассвело. Он поцеловал Черри и сказал, что она наказана за праздное любопытство, однако, если она будет хорошо себя вести, когда-нибудь он встретит ее здесь, в Леди Даунз.

С этими словами он исчез. Взошло солнце, а Черри все сидела, одна-одинешенька, на камне, и вместо благодатного сада на мили вокруг простиралось мрачное болото. Долго так сидела опечаленная Черри и в конце концов решила идти домой.

Родители считали ее умершей и, увидев дочь, приняли ее за призрак. Когда Черри рассказала о своих приключениях, все поначалу в этом усомнились. Но Черри повторяла в точности каждую подробность, и под конец все ей поверили.

Говорят, после этой истории Черри слегка тронулась рассудком и до самой своей смерти ходила в лунные ночи в Леди Даунз на розыски хозяина, которого она так и не нашла.

ДРАКОН ИЗ ЛАЙМИНСТЕРА

САДОВНИК, подстригавший живую изгородь, тщательно обтер ножницы, кинул на них перчатки и, усевшись на берегу, где тугие язычки первоцвета уже пробивались между сухими опавшими листьями, стал развязывать узелок с завтраком.

– Сказывают люди, – начал он неторопливо, расстилая на коленях носовой платок в красный горошек, – что в давние времена в этом самом пруду жил огромный дракон – Хапуга прозвали его – и сам этот пруд и сейчас называют Хапугина яма. И этот драконище повадился, скажу я вам, выплывать по вечерам к берегу и приглядывать всякую живность себе на ужин: пару лошадей, к примеру, а то и пару коров. Как увидит, так разом и хапнет, глазом моргнуть не успеешь. Дальше – больше, – усядется, бывало, на дамбе и каждого, кто идет мимо, слизывает языком, как лягушка мух с камня слизывает.

И вот из-за таких его разбойных дел – он и в дневное время плавал по реке и совал свою мерзкую морду под

окна, когда добрые люди на верфи садились чай пить, – началась у нас в Эрунделе жуткая заваруха.

Так вот, тогдашний мэр Эрундела вроде бы посулил награду тому, кто прикончит дракона. Уж я не упомню сейчас, сколько он посулил, но деньжата, видать, были немалые. Да только дракон нагнал на всех такого страху, что охотников не объявлялось, как говорится: "шел в поход, а оказался у своих ворот".

Тогда мэр вроде бы удвоил награду, и на этот раз пришел к нему один парень из Вика и сказал, что готов взяться за дело. Правда, теперь некоторые толкуют, будто бы он был из Эрундела, но это неправда. Звали его Джим Пэтток, и был он родом из Вика. Я-то знаю, что говорю, потому как я всю свою жизнь прожил в Тоддингтоне. Да и моя двоюродная бабка Джудит – она жила там, подальше, как раз где вы сворачиваете с дороги у больших вязов, – так вот она рассказывала, что, когда еще девчонкой была, неподалеку жил один парень и он ухаживал за девушкой, так вот девушка эта в конце концов вышла замуж вроде как за потомка того самого Джима Пэттока.

Ну да что бы там ни было, а этот Джим Пэтток является к мэру и выкладывает ему свой план. И мэр приказывает, чтобы этому Джиму выдали все, что он ни потребует, и чтобы не скупились, потому как Пэттоку надо еще спасибо сказать, что он взялся избавить всех от Хапуги.

И вот приходит Джим к кузнецу и заказывает огромадный железный котел, во-от такой.

Потом идет он к мельнику и требует вот такой здоровенный мешок муки.

Потом идет к дровосекам и велит разложить большущий костер посреди городской площади.

А когда сделали, как было велено, он испек из этой муки пудинг – самый огромадный на свете.

А когда пудинг был готов – не совсем готов, в середке-то он остался малость сыроват и тяжеловат, но это было к лучшему, – взгромоздили его на баржу, и кто-то дал Джиму упряжку лошадей, чтобы тянуть ее, и отправился Джим Пэтток, храбрый как лев, на встречу с драконом.

Люди шли за ним до самого моста, но дальше идти не решились, потому как старикан Хапуга лежал в воде насупротив дома Билли Доуса. Во всяком разе голова его лежала в воде, а прочие телесные части расположились по

всему холму, и даже протянулись за станцию, а хвостом он вырывал с корнем деревья в Бэтуортском парке. Увидел Дракон баржу с грузом и говорит сладким голосом:

– Привет, Человек!

– Привет, Дракон, – отвечает Джим Пэтток.

– А что это ты везешь, Человек? – спрашивает Дракон и принюхивается.

– Это пудинг, – отвечает Джим.

– Пудинг? – спрашивает Дракон. – А что это такое?

– А ты попробуй, – предлагает Джим.

Дважды предлагать ему не пришлось, тем же мигом дракон все подобрал дочиста: и пудинг, и лошадей, и баржу. Он и Джима бы прихватил, да тот успел зацепиться за большое дерево – из тех, что буря повалила в прошлом году.

– Недурно! – сказал Хапуга и облизнулся.

– Не желаешь ли добавки? – спросил Джим.

– Не откажусь! – ответил Дракон.

– Ладно, – сказал Джим, – днем еще привезу.

Да только он-то знал, чем обернется дело. Прошло немного времени и слышат люди, как дракон крутится в воде, и ревет, и рычит так, что впору лопнуть от натуги. И так бьет своим хвостищем, что вокруг летят комья земли с дом величиной, деревья и камни и все прочее.

Но не таков Джим Пэтток, чтобы пугаться. Выпил он к обеду галлон-другой эля и отправился поглядеть на дракона.

Старикан Хапуга как завидел его, так и зарычал:

– Ну, парень, только посмей привезти мне опять этот самый пудинг!

– А что случилось? – спрашивает Джим.

– Живот от него ужас как разболелся, – говорит дракон. – Такая тяжесть в желудке, что я и подняться не могу.

– А нечего было жадничать, – отвечает Джим. – Ну ничего, у меня с собой есть пилюля для быстрого излечения.

– Где она? – спрашивает дракон.

– А вот где, – отвечает Джим Пэтток и топором, что держал наготове за спиной, сносит Дракону голову!

Садовник сделал большой глоток чаю и погрузился в молчание.

– Это все?

– Все, сэр. Но если вы пройдете через вон ту калиточку

на церковный двор, то увидите могилу Джима. Она в самом углу слева, как минуете веранду, – между верандой и церковной стеной.

И там действительно есть могила, а над ней – конус, высеченный из хоршэмского камня. Но только на памятнике этом нет никакой надписи, и, хотя местные жители с гордостью показывают приезжим эту могилу, садовник был единственным встреченным мной человеком, который снабдил героя именем и местом жительства. Для всех остальных он остался просто Парнем, который убил Дракона.

Вот как орхэмцы дразнят эрунделцев:

В Эрунделе вонючую рыбу едят,
Посуду не моют неделю подряд!

На что эрунделцы отвечают так:

Звонят в Орхэме звонари от зари и до зари,
А к воскресному обеду есть одни лишь сухари!

ПОХЛЕБКА В ЯИЧНОЙ СКОРЛУПКЕ

В графстве Монтгомери, в округе Тревеглис, что возле Лланидлоса, есть маленькая пастушья хижина, ее называют Тут-и-Кумрус, что значит Дом Раздора; с этим прозвищем связана целая история.

Жили там муж и жена, и родились у них близнецы, в которых родители души не чаяли.

Однажды эту женщину позвала к себе по делу соседка, и пришлось ей оставить малюток одних. Идти вроде недалеко, да ведь страшно бросить люльку без присмотра, даже на минутку – дом-то на отшибе, и домовые, по слухам, в этих местах озоруют. Пришлось ей поторопиться – одна нога здесь, другая там.

На обратной дороге встретилось ей несколько взрослых эльфов – из тех, кого зовут голубыми рубашонками. Екнуло у нее сердечко: чтобы эльфы средь белого дня разгуливали! Лишь дома она успокоилась, застав все как было.

Но время шло, и отец с матерью дивиться стали – что-то их близнецы совсем не растут, ну просто карлики. Муж злится: не мои, побожиться могу, это дети; и жена кричит: твои, а то чьи же. И вышел промеж них великий раздор, почему и прозвали так этот дом.

Как-то вечером жена решила с горя пойти за советом к Гуру Кифаридду– уж он-то, думает, разберется, что к чему, раз он такой умный. А надо вам знать, что о ту пору готовились жать рожь и овес; и вот мудрец говорит ей:

– Когда будешь стряпать обед жнецам, выскреби все из куриного яйца, а в скорлупе свари похлебку; потом прикрой за собой дверь, как будто понесла обед в поле, и послушай, что близнецы скажут. Если услышишь такое, до чего детскому умишке не додуматься, скорей в дом, хватай эту парочку – да в воду их, благо Ллин Эбир у вас под окном. Ну а если ничего такого не услышишь, то ты их не трогай.

Когда пришел день жатвы, женщина все в точности исполнила, как сказал мудрец: только прикрыла за собой дверь, слышит, один младенец говорит другому:

Желудь вдруг превратился в дуб,
Яичко курицей стало,
Весь день варили в скорлупке суп,
А жнецам оказалось мало!

Мать, как услышала это, вбежала в дом, схватила младенцев и не мешкая бросила их в воды Ллина. Вдруг откуда ни возьмись домовые в своих штанишках: выловили из озера детишек-карликов и ну бежать без оглядки.

То-то была радость, когда увидела она дома в люльке своих близнецов живыми и невредимыми. А домовые уж больше не смели ее дурачить; и раздоров между женою и мужем уж больше не бывало.

ТИКАЮЩАЯ ЛЯГУШКА

ДАВНЫМ-ДАВНО, в старое доброе время, когда свинок было не счесть, псы не просили есть, мартышки табак курили, крыши блинами крыли, когда мостовые делали из пудингов, а жареные поросята бегали по улицам прямо с ножом и вилкой в боку и громко зазывали: "Подходите, откушайте меня!" – вот было время для путешественников!

И вот один путешественник, приехавший в Дэрластон по делам, в ожидании почтовой кареты, которая повезет его обратно домой, решил прогуляться за городом. Было это в самом конце лета, тихим, но душным вечером. Жатва уже началась, овес успели убрать, и куропатки выклевывали зернышки из светлого жнивья. Замирали песни жаворонков и черных дроздов, только золотистые дятлы, укрывшиеся на верхушках вязов, пытались еще подавать голос.

Путешественник, прельщенный свежестью лугового пастбища, перелез через загородку и стал бродить по лугу, не встретив никого, кроме старого крестьянина, которого приветствовал словами:

– А важные здесь, видно, прошли дожди!

– Так уж у нас повелось, – отвечал старик, – "субботняя луна два дня красна, и дождь и тишь несет она".

Путник пошел дальше, с удовольствием вдыхая аромат поздней жимолости и выискивая в траве ягоды. И так разогрелся, гуляючи, что стала ему мешать его тяжелая одежда. Он снял жилетку и перекинул ее через руку, и, пока шел от одной изгороди до другой, то и дело наклоняясь за ягодами, часы его незаметно выпали из жилетного кармашка и беззвучно соскользнули в траву между двумя кочками. И только час спустя, уже сидя в карете, путешественник обнаружил пропажу. Все это время, пока колеса экипажа, весело подпрыгивая, катились по дороге, часы лежали в траве и без устали тикали для окружающих кузнечиков, муравьев и божьих коровок.

Это были превосходные часы, с большим, круглым, белым циферблатом, с тоненькими стрелками, и тикали они отчетливо и звучно. По мере того как вечер становился

прохладней и смолкали последние птичьи голоса, тика раздавалось все громче и громче, словно часы были жив и звали на помощь, просили найти и освободить их из эт плена между двумя кочками. А когда зажглись перв звезды, белый циферблат засветился; теперь он сиял из ли, как редкий гриб или цветок, что открывается толь ночью.

Однако до наступления ночи никто здесь не появлял И лишь после того, как прозвучал вечерний колокол колокольне дэрластонской церкви, а в потемневшем не осталась одна лишь слабо мерцающая зеленоватая полос на западе, два человека пришли на луг, чтобы провери расставленные ловушки. Шли они, опасливо крадучись: э были браконьеры, а день у них, как известно, начинает в полночь. Они ловили каждый звук, и ничего удивител ного, что, оказавшись неподалеку от часов, вдруг встали прислушались.

– Эй, Билл, – шепнул первый браконьер. – Тут что-н неладно. Стой тихо и слушай!

– Да это кузнечик, – отвечал его товарищ.

– Кузнечик? Как бы не так! Отродясь я не слышал, чт бы кузнечик трещал без перерыва. Он и не замолкает со сем!

– Ну, значит, не кузнечик. Может, птица какая?

– Если уж птица, то не иначе как заколдованная, – ск зал Том, и в этот момент порыв ветра донес до них т канье, которое показалось еще более громким.

– Давай поищем его, – сказал Билл, и они осторожн двинулись на звук, всматриваясь в траву, пока не обнар жили часы.

– Вот он где! Глянь, как блестит! У него один больш глаз, видишь?

– Видеть-то вижу, да не нравится он мне что-то...

– И мне тоже. Смотри: он вот-вот прыгнет на нас. Д вай уберемся отсюда поживей, а то как вцепится в горло начнет сосать кровь, мы и оглянуться не успеем!

Приятель не нуждался в уговорах. Оба тут же дали тяг и бежали без остановки, пока не оказались на безопасно расстоянии от этого загадочного тикающего существа, чт залегло между двумя кочками.

Дома они рассказали о странных звуках, которые их та встревожили, и на другое утро весь Дэрластон узнал о чу

ной твари, обнаруженной на лугу, и весь Дэрластон, охваченный любопытством, собрался вокруг этой находки. Однако, хотя все жители получили возможность поглазеть на это существо, прискорбная правда заключалась в том, что ни один мужчина, ни одна женщина, ни один ребенок не мог сказать, что же это такое, ибо никто в Дэрластоне в жизни своей ни видывал часов.

В конце концов решили обратиться за разгадкой этого явления к очень древнему и очень мудрому старцу, который всю жизнь провел в здешних краях. И вот к Папаше — так именовали его в городке — отправилась депутация, и вскоре стало известно, что Папаша незамедлительно прибудет на место происшествия, чтобы разрешить загадку.

Папаша был действительно очень стар. Физиономия его сморщилась, как лежалое яблоко, и бесчисленные морщинки разбегались во все стороны, подобно трещинам на глиняном горшке. Глаза у него были водянисто-голубые, а рот полуоткрыт — казалось, что сжать челюсти ему не по силам. Не по силам было ему и передвигаться, так что Папашу прикатили на луг в старой тачке.

С появлением старца широкий круг любопытствующих зрителей разомкнулся, впустил его внутрь и сомкнулся опять. Тачка остановилась, наступила тишина.

— Подвезите мине к этому предмету, — приказал Папаша.

— Да ты как раз рядом с ним и стоишь, — отозвались из толпы.

— Ну тогда обвезите мине вокруг этого предмета, — сказал старец, и человек, державший тачку, с величайшей серьезностью объехал с ней вокруг часов.

— Еще раз обвезите мине, — потребовал старик, которому, похоже, катание это доставляло большое удовольствие. — А теперь обвезите мине в третий раз.

Третий круг тачки был завершен, ручки опущены на землю, и в толпе воцарилось напряженное молчание. И тогда, с трудом поднявшись на ноги, старец воздел руки к небу и прокричал голосом, исполненным ужаса:

— Это тикающая лягушка! Это тикающая лягушка! Слышь, ребята, запасайтесь камнями и палками: в Дэрластоне скоро будет светопреставление!

Услышав это зловещее пророчество, дэрластонцы, однако, меньше всего подумали о том, чтобы вооружаться

камнями и палками. Вместо того с истошными воплями и криками помчались они по домам. Так что Папаше, которого с невероятной скоростью покатили в тачке обратно, вполне могло показаться, что пророчество его сбылось еще раньше, чем он предполагал. Все жители Дэрластона – мужчины, женщины и дети – тотчас же укрылись в своих домах, наглухо заперев и заложив двери и окна. Весь этот и весь следующий день ни души не было видно в городке и на ближних полях. Дэрластон, в полном составе, сидел дома и ожидал наступления Страшного суда.

Но, разумеется, Страшный суд так и не наступил. Пока дэрластонские обыватели ревностно листали свои библии и твердили молитвы, произошло только одно событие: наш путешественник вышел из почтовой кареты перед самым въездом в городок, пересек пастбище, нашел свои потерянные часы, поблагодарил судьбу за удачу и отправился восвояси.

Лук натянет молодец,
Тут и сказочке конец.
Тот, кто сказкой недоволен,
Сочинить получше волен.

ВЕРШКИ ИЛИ КОРЕШКИ?

ЖИЛ-БЫЛ когда-то фермер по имени Джек о'Кент, и была у него маленькая полоска земли возле Кентчерча, что в Херефордшире. Того, что на ней росло, только-только хватало, чтобы прокормить его и семью, так что даже в самые урожайные годы жили они бедно.

Однажды утром пахал он свое поле, дошел уже до конца борозды и только собрался поворачивать, как вдруг поднял голову и увидел Лешего. Тот стоял, сложив руки на груди, широко раздвинув ноги, и сердито глядел на фермера сверху вниз.

– Это мое поле, – проворчал он. – Ты что здесь делаешь?

В глубине души фермер очень испугался, но виду не подал и преспокойно ответил:

– Тебя здесь так давно не было, вот я и вспахал его для тебя, а ты уж сажай на нем, что захочешь.

– Это мое поле, – повторил Леший, почесывая волосатую грудь, – но так и быть, можешь возделывать его для меня.

– Хорошо, – сказал фермер, немножко приободряясь. – А что, если нам поделиться? Я буду работать, а ты мне отдашь за труды половину урожая.

Леший вцепился грязной мозолистой рукой в плуг и говорит:

– А как будем делиться?

Джек-фермер подумал минутку и отвечал:

– В этом году ты возьмешь все, что над землею, а я все, что под землею. Тебе – вершки, мне – корешки.

Леший, похоже, остался доволен и согласился прийти осенью собирать свою часть урожая. Он поковылял по вспаханному полю, поискал лесенку – перебраться через изгородь, но ничего не нашел и неуклюже пролез в дырку. А фермер только поглядел ему вслед.

В тот год фермер посадил репу. Когда Леший явился за своей половиной урожая, ему достались только листья да сорняки, а Джек-фермер забрал себе все чудесные, круглые корешки, отвез домой и сложил в амбаре.

Леший был озлоблен и обескуражен, но поделать ничего не мог: ведь договор был выполнен честно. Он долго рылся в куче листьев, надеясь найти там что-нибудь полезное, но все без толку. Наконец Леший сказал:

– На следующий год сделаем по-другому. Мне – корешки, а тебе – вершки.

Фермер охотно согласился. В этот раз он очень тщательно вспахал поле, проборонил его и засеял отборной пшеницей.

Леший явился, когда на телегу уже были положены последние золотые снопы. Все жнецы пели – мужчины и женщины, мальчики и девочки, а большая сильная лошадь, неспешно поднимая мохнатые ноги, торжественно и бережно везла на ферму драгоценные снопы.

Леший не сразу догадался, что его опять провели. От

живья и корней было ему еще меньше проку, чем от листьев репы. Не стоило даже вытаскивать их из земли.

Но на празднике урожая все были очень добры к нему: он изрядно выпил, проглотил пару кусков горячего пудинга и даже попытался сплясать что-то вроде джиги, но свалился, не дойдя до танцоров. А после этого тихонько сидел в уголке, глядя на весельчаков, покуда наконец праздник не кончился и жнецы не разбрелись по домам.

– Послушай-ка, Джек, – сказал он фермеру. – Похоже, парень, ты большой затейник. Давай в следующий раз просто поделим все, что вырастет над землей.

Он положил громадную свою лапищу на плечо фермеру и сурово посмотрел на него.

– Будем работать вместе, и пусть каждый забирает столько, сколько пожнет.

Джек О'Кент согласился, и Леший поковылял прочь.

На следующий год снова выросла пшеница, и любо-дорого было смотреть на поле – золотым морем казалось оно на ветру.

А фермер пошел к кузнецу, и кузнец наделал для него железных прутьев, каждый около трех футов длиною, а толщиною примерно как чубук от глиняной трубки. Фермер взял прутья и в беспорядке натыкал их в землю в той части поля, которую должен был убирать Леший.

И вот, когда пришло время помериться силами, оба жнеца заранее наточили косы и, как только часы на соседней церкви пробили пять ударов, принялись за работу. Фермер быстро продвигался вперед; коса его так и свистела, и с каждым взмахом ложились, шелестя, на землю ровно срезанные колосья.

А у Лешего дела шли похуже. Не прошел он и двенадцати ярдов, а коса его зазубрилась в нескольких местах.

– Эй, послушай, мне надо передохнуть и пожикжикать немного, – прокричал он, имея в виду, что ему надо поточить косу на оселке.

Фермер только рассмеялся и продолжал работать – он сделал уже в два раза больше, чем его соперник.

– Да на этом поле полно жестких-прежестких лопухов, а стебли у них что твои железные прутья, – пожаловался Леший, уныло поглядывая на изуродованное, все в зазубринах, лезвие косы.

Но фермер был уже так далеко, что даже и не слышал

его. Солнце поднималось все выше, и роса на поле высохла. А у Лешего теперь совсем ничего не получалось, потому что со своей зазубренной косой он не мог продолжать работу, даже если ему попадался клочок земли без всяких прутьев. В конце концов он бросил косу в жнивье.

– Забирай свою поганую землю, – сказал он в отчаянии, – владей ею сам. Ноги моей здесь больше не будет. Мне все это надоело хуже горькой редьки, и ты, и твое поле.

И убрался он прочь и никогда больше не приходил, так что фермер его с тех пор и не видел. А зазубренную косу, оставленную Лешим, он подобрал и повесил у себя в сарае.

И вот теперь внук его с гордостью показывает эту косу друзьям, в подтверждение всей истории, и убеждает молодых крестьян никогда никого не бояться: ведь смышленый человек возьмет верх над любым забиякой.

УМНИКИ ИЗ ГОТТЕМА

О Готтем, твои надоели мне сказки –
Сплошные дурачества и неувязки:
То рыбу зачем-то топят в пруду,
А то на амбар взгромождают повозки,
Чтоб спрятать от солнца ненужные доски,
Как будто им солнце приносит беду.

ЖИЛ-БЫЛ в Готтеме человек, и пошел он однажды на рынок продавать сыр. Когда он спускался с холма к Ноттингемскому мосту, один из сыров выпал у него из мешка и покатился вниз по дороге.

– Эй, старина, – воскликнул парень. – Да ты никак сам знаешь дорогу? Пошлю-ка я и другие сыры за тобою.

Скинул с плеча мешок, вытащил сыры и запустил их, друг за дружкой, вниз по дороге. Один сыр угодил в кусты, другой в траву. А он прокричал им вдогонку:

– Встречаемся на рынке!

Пришел он на рынок, чтобы встретиться с сырами, прождал их там почти до закрытия и отправился наконец расспросить соседей, не видали ли где его сыров.

– Да кто же должен был их принести? – спрашивали соседи.

– Ну вот еще, принести! – отвечал парень. – Сами придут. Они отлично знают дорогу. Они бежали так быстро, что теперь, боюсь, уже в Йорке.

И, сказав это, отправился дальше, но никто до сих пор так его сыров и не видел.

* * *

Однажды двенадцать парней из Готтема пошли ловить рыбу. Одни зашли в воду, а другие остались на берегу. На обратном пути кто-то из них сказал:

– Мы отважно забирались сегодня в самую топь. Не дай бог, кто из нас утонул.

Ответил другой:

– И вправду! Давайте проверим. Нас было двенадцать, когда мы вышли из дому.

Тут все они пересчитались, и каждый сказал:

– Одиннадцать!

И тогда они решили:

– Кто-то из нас утонул.

Тогда они вернулись к ручью, где ловили рыбу, принялись искать того, кто утонул, и горько плакали. Проезжал мимо фермер, спросил их, чего они ищут и чем опечалены.

Они сказали:

– Сегодня мы ловили рыбу здесь, в ручье. Нас было двенадцать, когда мы вышли из дому, но один утонул.

Фермер сказал:

– Отвечайте мне, сколько вас всего.

Кто-то из них сказал, что одиннадцать: он не посчитал себя самого.

Фермер спросил:

– Что вы мне дадите, если я найду истину?

Они ответили:

– Все деньги, какие у нас есть.

– Тогда давайте деньги, – сказал фермер.

И стегал их кнутом по плечам, одного за другим, приговаривая:

— Вот вам первый, вот вам второй.

И так до двенадцати.

А дойдя до последнего, он дал ему на счастье здоровенную затрещину и сказал:

— А вот, так и быть, и двенадцатый.

— Да пребудет с тобою, — сказали они, — господнее благословение. Ты вернул нам умершего брата.

* * *

Как-то раз несколько жителей Готтема шли вдоль реки, в шести милях к югу от Ноттингема, и дошли наконец до места, где сливались два потока и вода бурлила, как в водовороте. Один из них сказал:

— Смотрите, как вода кипит.

Ответил другой:

— Будь у нас толокна вдоволь, приготовили бы столько каши, что всей деревне на месяц бы хватило.

И тогда решили они послать несколько человек обратно в деревню, чтобы принесли все толокно, сколько сумеют раздобыть. Те скоро вернулись, принесли толокна и высыпали в воду. Но тут встал перед ними вопрос, как узнают они, когда будет их каша готова. Тогда один из них предложил, что он прыгнет в воду, так что и с этой трудностью справились.

Договорились еще и о том, что, ежели он увидит, что каша готова, он подаст им знак, подняв руки. Парень прыгнул и обнаружил, что место это гораздо глубже, чем он предполагал; три раза всплывал он на поверхность, но не говорил ничего. Других же беспокоило его молчание, с нетерпением ждали они условного знака и, увидев, как он глотает ртом и машет руками, решили, что каша, видать, удалась на славу.

И прыгнули все, чтоб разделить с ним трапезу, и, конечно же, все утонули.

Ходил я в сад и собирал там травы и цветы.
Свою я сказку рассказал — теперь расскажешь ты.

ТОМ-ТИТ-ТОТ[1]

ЖИЛА на свете женщина. Испекла она как-то пять паштетов, а когда вынула их из духовки, корочка оказалась такой перепеченной, такой твердой, что не разгрызешь ее. Вот она и говорит своей дочке:

– Поставь-ка, доченька, паштеты вон на ту полку! Пусть полежат себе там немножко, может, еще подойдут.

Она хотела сказать, что корочка у паштетов станет помягче.

А девушка подумала: "Что ж, если еще подойдут, так эти я сейчас съем" – и принялась уплетать паштеты за обе щеки. Все дочиста съела, ни одного не оставила.

Вот пришло время ужинать, мать и говорит дочке:

– Пойди-ка принеси один паштет! Я думаю, они уже подошли.

Девушка пошла на кухню, но не увидела там никаких паштетов, а только пустую посуду.

Вернулась она назад и говорит:

– Не подошли еще.

– Ни один? – спрашивает мать.

– Ни один, – отвечает дочка.

– Ну, подошли ли, нет ли, – говорит мать, – все равно один съедим за ужином.

– Как так съедим? – удивилась девушка. – Да ведь они еще не подошли!

– Какие ни есть, все равно съедим, – говорит женщина. – Поди принеси самый лучший.

– Ни лучших, ни худших нету, – говорит девушка. – Какие были, я все съела. Значит, и взять их неоткуда, пока еще не подойдут.

Ну, мать видит – делать нечего. Придвинула к двери прялку и стала прясть. Сама прядет, сама подпевает:

[1] Эта и другие сказки, не помеченные в содержании знаком*, печатаются по изданиям: Английские народные сказки. М., 1957, и Шотландские народные сказки и предания. М., 1967; переводчики в этих изданиях ориентировались на иные фольклорные источники, чем и объясняются отдельные текстуальные расхождения с английскими вариантами, помещенными в настоящем издании.

Наша дочка съела пять, целых пять паштетов за день.
Наша дочка съела пять, целых пять паштетов за день.

А в это время шел по улице король. Услыхал он, что она поет, да не разобрал, про кого. Остановился и спрашивает:

– Про кого это ты поешь?

Матери стыдно было признаться, что ее дочь натворила, и она стала петь так:

Наша дочка пять мотков, целых пять спряла лишь за день.
Наша дочка пять мотков, целых пять спряла лишь за день.

– Бог мой! – воскликнул король. – Я отроду не слыхивал, чтобы кто-нибудь прял так быстро! – Потом он сказал женщине: – Послушай, я давно ищу себе невесту, а сейчас решил жениться на твоей дочери. Но запомни: одиннадцать месяцев в году твоя дочь будет есть все кушанья, какие захочет, будет носить все платья, какие выберет, будет веселиться, с кем пожелает. Но последний месяц в году она должна будет прясть по пяти мотков в день, а не то я ее казню.

– Хорошо, – согласилась мать; очень уж ей хотелось выдать дочку за самого короля.

"Ну, а насчет того, чтобы прясть по пяти мотков в день, – решила она, – придет время, как-нибудь вывернемся; да скорей всего, он и вовсе про них позабудет".

Сыграли свадьбу. Одиннадцать месяцев молодая королева ела все кушанья, какие хотела, носила все платья, какие выбирала, да и веселилась, с кем желала.

Когда же одиннадцатый месяц подходил к концу, она стала подумывать о том, что скоро придется ей прясть по пяти мотков в день. "Помнит или не помнит об этом король?" – гадала она.

Но король об этом ни словом не обмолвился, и она решила, что он позабыл о своей угрозе.

Однако в самый последний день одиннадцатого месяца король отвел жену в какую-то комнату, которой она еще не видела. В комнате было совсем пусто; только прялка стояла да скамеечка.

– Ну, милая, – сказал король, – завтра я запру тебя в этой комнате. Тебе оставят еду и льняную кудель, и, если к вечеру ты не спрядешь пяти мотков, слетит твоя голова с плеч!

И он ушел по своим делам.

Бедняжка перепугалась — ведь она всю жизнь была с ленцой, а прясть и вовсе не умела. "Что со мной будет завтра? — думала она. — Помощи-то ждать неоткуда!" Села она на скамеечку и ах как горько заплакала!

Вдруг слышит — кто-то тихонько стучится. Она встала и быстро открыла дверь. И что же она увидела? Крошечного черного бесенка с длинным хвостом. Он взглянул на нее с любопытством и спросил:

— О чем ты плачешь?

— А тебе что?

— Да так просто. А все-таки скажи, о чем ты плачешь?

— Если я скажу, лучше мне не станет.

— Кто знает! — проговорил бесенок и вильнул хвостиком.

— Что ж, — вздохнула королева, — хоть лучше мне и не станет, но, пожалуй, и хуже не будет.

Взяла да и рассказала ему и про паштеты и про мотки — словом, про все.

— Вот что я для тебя сделаю, — сказал черный бесенок. — Каждое утро я буду подходить к твоему окну и забирать всю кудель, а вечером приносить мотки пряжи.

— А сколько ты за это возьмешь? — спросила королева.

Бесенок покосился на нее и ответил:

— Каждый вечер я до трех раз буду спрашивать тебя, как меня зовут. Если к концу месяца не угадаешь, будешь моей!

Королева подумала, что за целый-то месяц она, уж конечно, отгадает его имя, и ответила:

— Хорошо, я согласна.

— Вот и ладно! — обрадовался бесенок и быстро завертел хвостиком.

На другое утро король отвел жену в комнату, куда уже принесли льняную кудель и еду на один день, и сказал:

— Вот тебе кудель, милая, и если к вечеру ты ее не спрядешь, не сносить тебе головы!

Вышел из комнаты и запер дверь на замок.

Только он ушел, послышался стук в окно.

Королева вскочила и распахнула его. Видит - сидит на карнизе маленький черный бесенок!

— Где кудель? — спросил он.

— Вот, — ответила королева и подала ему кудель.

Вечером опять послышался стук. Королева вскочила и распахнула окно. На этот раз черный бесенок держал в руках пять мотков льняной пряжи.

— Бери! — сказал бесенок и протянул ей мотки. — Ну, а теперь скажи, как меня зовут?

— Наверное, Билл? — молвила королева.

— Нет, не угадала, — ответил черный бесенок и вильнул хвостиком.

— Ну так Нед?

— Опять не угадала, — сказал бесенок и завертел хвостиком.

— Может быть, Марк?

— Нет, нет, не угадала, — сказал бесенок, еще быстрей завертел хвостиком и вдруг пропал.

Вечером пришел в комнату король. Видит — лежит пять мотков льняной пряжи.

— Ну, значит, нынче не надо мне тебя казнить, милая! — сказал он. — А завтра утром тебе опять принесут еду и кудель. — И он ушел.

Так изо дня в день ей приносили льняную кудель и еду, а утром и вечером появлялся черный бесенок. И весь день королева думала да гадала, какое же имя ей назвать вечером? Но ни разу не угадала. И чем ближе к концу подходил месяц, тем злорадней смотрел на нее черный бесенок, тем быстрей вертел хвостиком после каждого ее неверного ответа.

И вот настал предпоследний день. Бесенок, как всегда, пришел с пятью мотками и спросил:

— Ну, как, угадала, наконец, мое имя?

— Никодим? — молвила королева.

— Нет.

— Самуил?

— Нет.

— Ну, так, может, Мафусаил?

— Нет, нет и нет! — крикнул бесенок, и глазки его загорелись, как угольки в очаге. — Так слушай! Остался еще один день! Не угадаешь — завтра вечером будешь моей!

И пропал.

Страшно стало королеве. Но тут она услышала, что идет король. Он вошел в комнату, увидел пять мотков и сказал:

— Ну, милая, я думаю, ты завтра к вечеру опять напря-

дешь пять мотков, так что мне не надо будет тебя казнить. Поэтому давай поужинаем вместе.

Принесли ужин и вторую скамеечку для короля, и муж с женой принялись за еду. Но не успел король проглотить и двух кусков, как вдруг перестал есть и расхохотался.

– Что с тобой? – спросила жена.

– Ты только послушай! – ответил он. – Отправился я нынче на охоту в лес и заехал в какое-то незнакомое место. Там была заброшенная меловая яма. И вот почудилось мне, будто в ней что-то жужжит. Я соскочил с лошади, подошел к яме и заглянул вниз. И кого же я там увидел? Крошечного черного бесенка, смешного-пресмешного! Как ты думаешь, что он делал? Прял на крошечной прялке быстро-пребыстро! Прядет, хвостиком вертит и напевает:

Нимми-Нимми-Нот,
А я – Том-Тит-Тот!

Как услышала это королева, чуть не подскочила от радости! Однако ни слова не сказала.

Наутро, когда черный бесенок опять пришел за куделью, он поглядывал на нее еще злораднее.

Под вечер королева, как всегда, услышала его стук в окно. Вот открыла она окно и видит: сидит бесенок на карнизе и ухмыляется – рот до ушей. А хвостик-то, хвостик так и вертится, так и вертится, быстро-пребыстро!

– Ну, как же меня зовут? – спросил бесенок и отдал королеве последние мотки.

– Соломон? – молвила она, притворившись, будто ей страшно.

– Нет, не угадала! – ответил он и шагнул к ней.

– Ну, тогда Зеведей?

– Не угадала! – сказал он, расхохотавшись, и так быстро завертел хвостиком, что чудилось, будто что-то черное мелькает, а что – разобрать невозможно.

– Подумай хорошенько! Ошибешься – и ты моя!

И он протянул к ней свои черные лапки.

Королева, глядя ему в лицо, отступила на шаг, другой, со смехом показала на него пальцем и наконец промолвила:

Нимми-Нимми-Нот,
А ты — Том-Тит-Тот!

Как услышал это бесенок, взвизгнул и пропал во тьме за окном. С тех пор его и след простыл.

ТРОСТНИКОВАЯ ШАПКА

НУ, слушайте! Жил когда-то один богач, и было у него три дочери. Вот задумал он как-то узнать, крепко ли они его любят. И спрашивает он старшую дочь:

— Как ты меня любишь, дорогая?

— Ах, — отвечает она, — я люблю тебя, как жизнь!

— Это хорошо, — говорит он.

Вот спрашивает он среднюю:

— А ты как меня любишь, дорогая?

— Ах, — отвечает она, — больше всего на свете!

— Очень хорошо, — говорит он.

Наконец спрашивает младшую:

— А как же ты меня любишь, моя дорогая?

— Я люблю тебя, как свежее мясо любит соль, — отвечает она.

Ну и рассердился же отец!

— Значит, ты меня вовсе не любишь, — говорит. — А раз так — вон из моего дома!

И он тут же выгнал ее вон и захлопнул за нею дверь.

Так-то вот. Пошла она куда глаза глядят и все шла и шла, пока не подошла к болоту. Там нарвала она тростника и сплела себе из него накидку с капюшоном. Закуталась в нее с головы до ног, чтобы скрыть свое нарядное платье, и отправилась дальше. Долго ли, коротко ли — дошла она наконец до одного богатого дома.

— Не нужна ли вам служанка? — спрашивает.

— Нет, не нужна, — отвечают.

– Мне больше некуда идти, – говорит она. – Жалованья я не прошу, а делать буду, что прикажут.

– Что ж, – отвечают ей, – если хочешь мыть горшки и чистить кастрюли, оставайся!

И она осталась, и мыла горшки, и чистила кастрюли, и делала всю грязную работу. А так как она никому не открыла своего имени, ее прозвали "Тростниковой Шапкой".

Вот как-то раз по соседству давали большой бал, и слугам разрешили пойти посмотреть на знатных господ. А Тростниковая Шапка сказала, что из сил выбилась и никуда не пойдет, и осталась дома.

Но как только все ушли, она сбросила свою тростниковую накидку, умылась и отправилась на бал; и уж поверьте мне, нарядней ее на балу никого не было.

И надо же было так случиться, что сын ее хозяев тоже приехал на этот бал. Он с первого взгляда влюбился в Тростниковую Шапку и весь вечер танцевал только с ней. Но Тростниковая Шапка не дождалась, пока кончится бал, и потихоньку убежала домой. Когда остальные служанки вернулись, она уже лежала в своей тростниковой накидке и притворялась спящей.

Наутро служанки и говорят ей:

– Ой, Тростниковая Шапка, кого мы вчера видели на балу!

– Кого? – спрашивает она.

– Была там одна леди – раскрасавица! А уж как разодета-разряжена! Наш молодой хозяин прямо глаз с нее не сводил.

– Вот бы мне взглянуть на нее! – говорит Тростниковая Шапка.

– За чем же дело стало? Нынче вечером опять будет бал, она, наверное, приедет.

Когда же настал вечер, Тростниковая Шапка опять сказала, что из сил выбилась и никуда не пойдет. Но не успели слуги уйти, как она сбросила свою тростниковую накидку, умылась и поспешила на бал.

А молодой хозяин уже дожидался ее. Весь вечер он танцевал только с ней и глаз с нее не сводил. Но она опять не дождалась, пока бал кончится, и потихоньку ускользнула домой. И когда остальные служанки вернулись, она уже лежала в своей тростниковой накидке и притворялась спящей.

На другой день служанки и говорят ей:

– Ах, Тростниковая Шапка, вот бы тебе посмотреть на ту леди! Она опять была на балу, разодетая-разряженная. А наш молодой хозяин прямо глаз с нее не сводил.

– Да, – говорит Тростниковая Шапка, – я бы не прочь на нее поглядеть.

– Так слушай: нынче вечером опять бал. Идем с нами! Она обязательно приедет.

Но когда настал и этот вечер, Тростниковая Шапка опять сказала, что из сил выбилась и никуда не пойдет. А как только все ушли, сбросила свою тростниковую накидку, умылась и поспешила на бал.

Молодой хозяин ей очень обрадовался. Он опять танцевал только с ней и глаз с нее не сводил. На этот раз он спросил, как ее зовут и откуда она родом, но она не ответила. Тогда он подарил ей кольцо и сказал, что умрет с тоски, если больше ее не увидит.

Тростниковая Шапка опять не дождалась, пока кончится бал, и потихоньку убежала домой. И когда остальные служанки вернулись, она уже лежала в своей тростниковой накидке и притворялась спящей.

На другой день служанки ей и говорят:

– Вот видишь, Тростниковая Шапка, не пошла ты с нами вчера, а теперь уж не видать тебе красавицы – балов больше не будет!

– Жаль! Мне так хотелось ее увидеть! – ответила Тростниковая Шапка.

А молодой хозяин всячески старался узнать, куда девалась красавица, но, где он ни бывал, кого ни спрашивал, ничего не узнал. И так затосковал по ней, что занемог, слег в постель и даже есть перестал.

– Свари молодому хозяину жидкую кашу! Может, отведает. А то как бы не умер с тоски по красавице, – приказали поварихе.

Повариха принялась варить кашу, и тут в кухню вошла Тростниковая Шапка.

– Что ты варишь? – спросила она.

– Кашу молодому хозяину, – ответила повариха. – Может, отведает. А то как бы не умер с тоски по красавице.

– Дай-ка я сварю! – попросила Тростниковая Шапка.

Повариха согласилась, хоть и не сразу, и Тростниковая

Шапка принялась варить жидкую кашу. А когда сварила, бросила в нее свое кольцо.

Вот отнесла повариха кашу больному. Тот съел кашу и увидел на дне чашки свое кольцо.

– Позовите повариху! – приказал он.

Повариха явилась.

– Кто варил кашу? – спросил он.

– Я, – соврала она с перепугу.

А он посмотрел ей в глаза и говорит:

– Нет, не ты! Скажи правду, кто ее варил. Тебе за это ничего не будет.

– Коли так, – говорит она, – кашу варила Тростниковая Шапка.

– Пришли ко мне Тростниковую Шапку! – велит он.

Явилась Тростниковая Шапка.

– Это ты варила мне кашу? – спрашивает юноша.

– Я, – отвечает она.

– А у кого ты взяла это кольцо? – спрашивает он.

– У того, кто мне дал его! – отвечает Тростниковая Шапка.

– Но кто же ты такая?

– Сейчас увидишь!

И она сбросила с себя тростниковую накидку и предстала пред ним во всей своей красе.

Ну, молодой хозяин, конечно, скоро поправился, и они стали женихом и невестой. Свадьбу решили справить на славу и гостей созвали со всей округи. Отца Тростниковой Шапки тоже пригласили. А она по-прежнему скрывала, кто она такая.

И вот перед самой свадьбой она пошла к поварихе и сказала:

– Будешь готовить мясные блюда, ни в одно соли не клади.

– Невкусно получится, – заметила повариха.

– Ничего, – сказала Тростниковая Шапка.

– Ладно, не буду солить, – согласилась повариха.

Настал день свадьбы, и Тростниковую Шапку обвенчали с молодым хозяином. После венчания все гости сели за стол. Но когда они попробовали мясо, оно оказалось таким безвкусным, что его невозможно было есть. А отец Тростниковой Шапки отведал одно кушанье, потом другое и вдруг как зальется слезами.

– Что с вами? – спросил его молодой хозяин.

– Ах! – ответил ему гость. – Была у меня дочь. Однажды я спросил ее, как она меня любит, и она ответила: "Как свежее мясо любит соль". Ну, я решил, что она меня вовсе не любит, и выгнал ее из дома. А теперь вижу, что она любила меня крепче всех. Но, должно быть, ее уже нет в живых.

– Нет, отец, она здесь! – воскликнула Тростниковая Шапка, бросилась к отцу и обняла его.

С тех пор все они зажили счастливо.

КОРОВИЙ ОБОРОТЕНЬ

В прошлом столетии по соседству с Хедли, возле Блекберн-Фелла, что на запад от Рейвенсуорта, а точнее – на дороге, ведущей в Тэнфилд, людям часто досаждали проделки оборотня, по имени Коровий оборотень. Он был из тех духов, что не так уж жестоки, а скорее лукавы и проказливы. Никому не причинял он большого зла, только ужасно любил пугать. Встретится с каким-нибудь человеком, сыграет с ним дурную шутку, а как увидит, что тот растерялся и испугался, зайдется громким, грубым хохотом.

Этот зловредный Коровий оборотень был прямо чумой для молоденьких служанок на фермах возле Фелла. То он подражал голосу их возлюбленных, и девушки вскакивали с постели и бежали к окну. То, когда они куда-нибудь отлучались, опрокидывал горшки, открывал дверь в погреб и приглашал кошку отведать сливок, спускал петли на носках, которые они вязали, или ломал им прялку.

Часто он оборачивался любимой коровой служанки и заставлял девушку гоняться за ним по всему полю, пока наконец ей не удавалось его поймать. Когда же она начинала доить, он все время брыкался и громко и жалобно ревел, будто бес в него вселился. А затем опрокидывал ведро, ловко освобождался от привязи и с громким мыча-

нием удирал, и тут девушка понимала, что ее морочил Коровий оборотень. Это была его любимая проделка, поэтому он, наверное, и получил свое имя. Вот один из рассказов о Коровьем оборотне.

Жила-была когда-то одна старушка. Звали ее Гуди Блейк. Жила она в маленьком-премаленьком домике, а зарабатывала себе на хлеб тем, что исполняла поручения своих соседей. За это в одном месте ее кормили завтраком, в другом – обедом, так она кое-как и перебивалась. И всегда она была веселая, живая, как будто никакой нужды и не знала.

Так вот, однажды летним вечером шла она по большой дороге в свою лачугу и, как всегда, улыбалась и вдруг увидела в канаве большой черный горшок. "Батюшки мои! – воскликнула Гуди. – Вот подходящая вещь для меня, если б только у меня было что в нем варить. Да, кто же его в канаве-то оставил?"

Она посмотрела вокруг в надежде, что владелец горшка окажется неподалеку, но никого не увидела.

"Может, он дырявый, – подумала Гуди, – и потому его выбросили. Но в него можно посадить цветы и поставить на окно. Вот будет славно. Возьму-ка я его домой".

Она взяла горшок, подняла крышку и заглянула внутрь.

"Боже мой! – закричала она в великом изумлении. – Да в нем полным-полно золотых монет! Вот так удача! Как мне повезло!"

И правда, горшок был полон до краев большими золотыми монетами. Ну, вначале она стояла как вкопанная, но потом все же пришла в себя и сказала: "Неужто я стала богатой? Да! Прямо-таки ужасная богачка!"

Несколько раз она это повторила, а потом стала думать, как ей дотащить свой клад домой. Было слишком тяжело нести горшок в руках, и она решила, что самое лучшее – обвязать его концом своего большого платка и тащить за собой как тележку.

"Скоро стемнеет, – рассуждала она, торопливо семеня по дороге, – что же, тем лучше. Соседи не увидят, что я несу домой, и я всю ночь смогу думать, что я сделаю с этим сокровищем. Может, мне купить большой дом, сидеть у камина, попивать чай и совсем не работать, ну прямо как королева. А может, закопать горшок в саду и оставить немножко монет в старом фарфоровом чайнике, что стоит на

камине. А может... Гуди! Гуди! Вот ведь счастье какое привалило!"

Но тут она почувствовала, что устала тащить такой тяжелый груз, остановилась отдохнуть и обернулась посмотреть на свое сокровище.

Вот те на! Вместо горшка с золотом перед ней лежал большой кусок серебра.

Она посмотрела на него, протерла глаза, снова посмотрела и наконец сказала: "Подумать только! А я-то была уверена, что нашла горшок с золотом. Мне, наверное, приснилось. Но ведь это удача! С серебром гораздо меньше хлопот: легче его уберечь, не так легко украсть. Из-за этих золотых монет меня бы, наверное, убили, а серебро..." И тут она пошла дальше и стала думать, что она с ним сделает и какая она богачка. Шла она шла, пока не устала. Остановилась отдохнуть и обернулась назад посмотреть, цело ли ее сокровище. И увидела большой кусок железа.

"Подумать только, — воскликнула Гуди, — а я его приняла за серебро. Мне, наверное, оно во сне приснилось. Но ведь это удача! Как мне повезло! Это очень мне подходит. За старое железо я смогу получить много пенсов, а иметь пенсы гораздо лучше, чем золото или серебро. Я бы глаз не сомкнула, все боялась бы, что меня ограбят. А вот такие монетки — они мне очень кстати. За железо я много получу и стану такой богачкой, такой богачкой..."

Так она шла и шла и все думала, как она потратит свои пенсы, а когда устала, остановилась отдохнуть и обернулась назад посмотреть, цело ли ее сокровище. И увидела большой камень.

"Подумать только! — воскликнула она и засмеялась. — А я-то приняла его за железо! Мне, наверное, оно во сне приснилось. Но уж тут-то мне повезло, так повезло! Мне давно ужасно нужен большой камень, чтобы подпереть калитку. Вот это да! Все к лучшему. Как хорошо, когда везет!"

И тут она заторопилась, чтоб поскорей посмотреть, как камень будет подпирать калитку, быстро спустилась с холма и подошла к своему дому. Отперла калитку и повернулась, чтобы отвязать свой платок от камня, который лежал на тропинке у нее за спиной. Да, конечно, это был самый настоящий камень. Было еще достаточно светло и хорошо видно, как он лежит тихо, мирно, как и положено камню.

Она наклонилась над ним, чтобы отвязать конец платка
Ой! Что бы вы думали! Он вдруг подпрыгнул, завизжал
в одну минуту стал большим, как копна сена. Потом у него
выросли четыре ноги, большие и тощие, длинные уши
хвост, и он помчался вприпрыжку, визжа, завывая и хохо
ча, как негодный проказник мальчишка.

Старушка долго смотрела ему вслед, пока он совсем не
скрылся из виду, а потом и сама расхохоталась.

"Ну и везет же мне! — смеялась она. — Я самая везучая
во всей округе. Подумать только, я сама, своими собствен
ными глазами, видела Коровьего оборотня, да еще за
просто с ним обращалась! Вот ведь счастье какое!"

И Гуди Блейк вошла в свой домишко и весь вечер смея
лась над тем, как ей удивительно повезло.

ЧЕРНЫЙ БЫК НОРРОУЭЙСКИЙ

В старину, много веков назад, жила-была одна вдовствующая королева, и было у нее три дочери. Королева была такая бедная, что ей с дочерьми часто даже есть было нечего.

И вот старшая принцесса надумала идти по свету счастье свое искать, и мать согласилась ее отпустить.

— Лучше уж на чужой стороне работать, чем дома с голоду помирать, — говорила она.

Неподалеку от их замка жила старуха птичница. Она слыла колдуньей, и говорили, будто она может предсказывать будущее. Вот королева и послала к ней старшую принцессу спросить, в какую из четырех стран света ей лучше пойти счастье свое искать.

Птичница жалела королеву и ее красавиц дочерей и была рада подать им добрый совет.

— Тебе незачем идти далеко, милочка, — сказала она старшей принцессе. — Дойди только до задней двери моего дома и выгляни из нее.

Принцесса побежала по сеням к задней двери старухиного дома, и что же она увидела? Великолепная карета, запряженная шестеркой буланых лошадей, катила по дороге.

Девушка всполошилась и побежала назад в кухню рассказать птичнице про карету.

— Хорошо, отлично! — сказала ей старуха, очень довольная. — Вот ты и увидела свое счастье! Эта карета приехала за тобой.

И правда, карета остановилась у ворот замка, и средняя принцесса уже побежала к птичнице сказать сестре, чтобы та поскорее возвращалась домой — ведь карета за ней приехала!

Не помня себя от радости, старшая принцесса поспешила домой и простилась с матерью и сестрами. Потом села в карету, и лошади помчали ее вдаль.

Говорят, будто эта карета направилась ко дворцу могущественного и богатого принца и он женился на старшей принцессе.

Несколько недель спустя средняя принцесса решила, по примеру сестры, пойти к птичнице и спросить, в какую сторону ей пойти счастья своего поискать. И, конечно, она в глубине души надеялась, что с нею случится то же, что случилось со старшей ее сестрой.

Так оно и вышло. Старуха птичница велела ей выглянуть за дверь ее дома, что выходила на задний двор. Принцесса выглянула и увидела, что к их замку подъезжает карета, запряженная шестеркой. Она рассказала про это старухе, а та ласково улыбнулась и велела ей бежать домой, потому что она уже нашла свое счастье. Ну, принцесса побежала домой, села в карету и уехала.

Младшей принцессе тоже захотелось попытать счастья. Веселая, полная надежд, она в тот же вечер побежала к колдунье.

Старуха велела младшей принцессе подойти к задней двери, и та пошла. Она думала, что третья карета, запряженная шестеркой, вот-вот подкатит к воротам замка.

Но не тут-то было! Никакой кареты она не увидела. Никто не ехал по дороге. Младшая принцесса в досаде побежала к птичнице и сказала, что кареты нет.

— Ну, значит, счастье твое придет к тебе не сегодня, — молвила старуха. — Подожди до завтра.

Младшая принцесса вернулась домой и на другой день

опять пошла к птичнице. Но и на этот раз надежды ее не сбылись. Как она ни всматривалась в даль, никакой кареты не появлялось. А вот на третий день... Что же она увидела на третий день? По дороге, свирепо дергая головой, с ревом мчался громадный черный бык.

Принцесса очень испугалась, захлопнула дверь и побежала к птичнице сказать, что к дому бежит страшный, свирепый бык.

– Ох, милочка, – воскликнула старуха, всплеснув руками, – кто бы мог подумать, что счастьем твоим будет Черный Бык Норроуэйский!

Услышала это бедная принцесса и побледнела. Ведь она пошла искать свое счастье, но никак не ожидала, что оно окажется таким страшным.

– Да разве этот бык может быть моим счастьем! – вскричала она в ужасе. – Не могу же я уйти с быком!

– Придется, – спокойно молвила птичница. – Ты выглянула за дверь моего дома, чтобы найти свое счастье. Значит, раз уж счастье твое пришло, придется тебе его взять.

Принцесса в слезах побежала к матери. Она твердила, что не хочет никуда уходить из дому. Но королева-мать сказала ей то же, что говорила птичница. И вот, когда громадный черный бык подошел к воротам замка, пришлось принцессе сесть к нему на спину. Пока она садилась, он стоял смирно, а как только села, сразу пустился вскачь. Бедная принцесса крепко ухватилась за его рога, а сама плакала и дрожала от страха.

Бык все бежал и бежал, а несчастная девушка наконец совсем ослабела от страха и голода, так что едва держалась на его спине. Она боялась, что вот-вот выпустит из рук рога и свалится на землю. Но бык вдруг чуть-чуть повернул к ней свою огромную голову и проговорил удивительно ласковым и приветливым человеческим голосом:

– Скушай то, что у меня в правом ухе лежит, и выпей то, что у меня в левом ухе. Это тебя подкрепит.

Принцесса сунула дрожащую руку в правое ухо быка и вынула оттуда ломоть хлеба с мясом. Она съела хлеб с мясом, и ей полегчало. Потом сунула руку в левое ухо быка и вытащила маленькую склянку с вином. Выпила вино, и силы чудом вернулись к ней.

Долго бежал бык. Принцесса уже подумывала, что

скоро будет Край Света. Но вот впереди показался великолепный замок.

— Тут мы переночуем, — сказал Черный Бык Норроуэйский. — Это дом одного из моих братьев.

Принцесса очень удивилась, но ничего не ответила — слишком уж она устала. А бык пробежал по двору замка и боднул рогами парадную дверь.

Дверь тотчас открыл слуга в роскошной ливрее. Он очень почтительно приветствовал быка и помог принцессе спешиться. Потом проводил ее в богато убранный зал, где ее встретили сам владелец замка с супругой и их гости. А Черный Бык Норроуэйский ушел ночевать на лужайку в парк, что раскинулся вокруг замка.

Владелец замка и его супруга приняли принцессу очень радушно. Накормили ее ужином и проводили в богато убранную спальню, где все стены были увешаны зеркалами в золотых рамах.

Наутро, когда Черный Бык Норроуэйский подбежал к парадной двери, владелец замка и его супруга подарили принцессе крупное красивое яблоко и сказали:

— Положи его в карман и бережно храни. Не трогай это яблоко, пока не попадешь в большую беду — такую, что хуже и быть не может. А тогда разломи яблоко, и оно вызволит тебя из беды.

Принцесса положила яблоко в карман, потом ее подсадили на спину к быку, и он снова тронулся в путь.

Весь день они провели в дороге, а вечером впереди показался другой замок, еще выше и богаче, чем первый.

— Тут мы переночуем, — сказал принцессе Черный Бык Норроуэйский. — Здесь живет другой мой брат.

Эту ночь принцесса провела в роскошной спальне, где стены были сплошь увешаны шелковыми тканями. Владелец этого замка и его супруга тоже встретили принцессу приветливо и всячески старались ей угодить.

А наутро они на прощанье подарили ей огромную грушу, какой принцесса в жизни не видывала, и сказали, что разломить ее она должна лишь тогда, когда попадет в большую беду, такую, что хуже и быть не может. И как только она разломит грушу, та вызволит ее из беды.

Третий день прошел так же, как и второй. Много-много миль пробежал Черный Бык Норроуэйский с принцессой

на спине, а когда зашло солнце, впереди показался замок еще более роскошный, чем первые два.

Этим замком владел младший брат Черного Быка, и здесь принцесса переночевала. А бык опять ушел на всю ночь в парк. На этот раз принцесса получила перед отъездом чудесную большую сливу с наказом разломить ее, только если принцесса попадет в большую беду, такую, что хуже и быть не может. А тогда пусть разломит сливу, и та вызволит ее из беды.

Однако четвертый день выдался непохожим на первые три. Вечером принцесса не увидела никакого замка. К тому времени, когда тени на земле стали удлиняться, бык вошел в темное глубокое ущелье, такое мрачное, такое жуткое, что у бедной принцессы сердце захолонуло.

Перед тем как войти в ущелье, Черный Бык Норроуэйский остановился и сказал:

— Тут тебе придется спешиться, госпожа моя. В этом ущелье я буду сражаться не на жизнь, а на смерть. Биться я буду один, и никто не должен мне помогать. Темное мрачное ущелье, что лежит перед нами, — это логово Духа Тьмы. Он творит много зла в нашем мире. Я хочу с ним сразиться и победить его и надеюсь, что смогу. А ты сядь вот на этот камень и не шевели ни рукой, ни ногой, ни языком, пока я не вернусь. Если только чуть шевельнешься, попадешь под власть Злого Духа, что обитает в этом ущелье.

— Но как же я узнаю, что с тобой случилось, если мне нельзя ни говорить, ни шевелиться? — в тревоге спросила принцесса.

За эти четыре дня она уже успела привыкнуть к огромному Черному Быку.

— Ты узнаешь это, когда оглянешься кругом, — ответил Черный Бык. — Если все вокруг тебя посинеет, знай, что я победил Злого Духа. Если же все покраснеет, знай, что Злой Дух одолел меня.

И тут Черный Бык Норроуэйский отошел от нее и вскоре скрылся в темной глубине ущелья. А принцесса села на камень и сидела неподвижно, старалась даже пальчиком не пошевельнуть, до того она боялась, как бы не настигло ее неведомое несчастье.

Так она просидела с добрый час. И вдруг все вокруг нее начало менять свой цвет — сначала стало серым, потом лазурным, словно само небо спустилось на землю.

"Черный Бык победил! Какой молодец!" – подумала принцесса и от радости пересела поудобнее и скрестила ноги. Но вот горе! Сразу же на нее пали злые чары, и она стала невидимой для принца Норроуэйского.

Ведь Черный Бык на самом деле был человеком. Его звали Черный Рыцарь, принц Норроуэйский. Когда-то его заколдовали и обратили в черного быка. А теперь он победил Злого Духа, снова стал человеком и уже бежал по ущелью к принцессе, чтобы показаться ей в настоящем виде. Ведь он ее полюбил и хотел на ней жениться.

Но он не увидел принцессы. Долго-долго искал он ее, да так и не нашел. А она в это время с нетерпением ждала его на камне и дождаться не могла. Она тоже его не видела, как он не видел ее.

И так она все сидела и сидела и наконец до того утомилась и до того ей стало страшно и одиноко, что она расплакалась и плакала, пока не уснула. А когда утром проснулась, поняла, что, сколько ни сиди на камне, толку не будет. И вот она встала и пошла куда глаза глядят.

И она все шла и шла, пока дорога не уперлась в огромную стеклянную гору. Принцесса много раз пыталась подняться на эту гору, но не могла. Гора была такая скользкая, что стоило путнице вскарабкаться на несколько футов, как она сейчас же опять соскальзывала вниз.

Тогда она решила обойти гору в надежде отыскать тропинку на вершину. Но гора была такая большая, а принцесса так устала, что потеряла всякую надежду и совсем приуныла. Она плелась, еле передвигая ноги и проливая слезы, и уже боялась, что скоро совсем выбьется из сил. И тогда останется ей только лечь и умереть.

Но вот около полудня она подошла к какому-то домику. Близ него была кузница, и старик кузнец работал у наковальни.

Принцесса вошла и спросила его, нет ли тут где-нибудь тропинки на вершину стеклянной горы. Кузнец отложил свой молот, посмотрел на нее и покачал головой.

– Нет, девушка, – сказал он, – через стеклянную гору дороги нет. Правда, ее можно обойти, но это нелегко – сотни миль отшагать придется. Да если кто и попытается обойти эту гору, все равно заблудится. Подняться на вершину горы можно, но только в железных башмаках.

– А где достать железные башмаки? – спросила прин-

цесса. – Ты бы не мог мне сковать такие, добрый человек? Я охотно за них заплачу.

Но тут она вдруг вспомнила, что денег у нее нет.

– Эти башмаки не продаются за серебро, – ответил старик. – Их можно получить только в награду за свою работу. Я один умею ковать такие башмаки, да и кую для тех, кто согласен мне послужить.

– А как долго мне придется служить, чтобы ты сковал мне железные башмаки? – спросила принцесса.

– Семь лет, – ответил старик кузнец. – Ведь это башмаки не простые, а волшебные. И "семь" тоже волшебное число.

Делать нечего, пришлось принцессе наняться к старику кузнецу. Семь долгих лет она ему служила – стряпала, шила, штопала, стирала, убирала дом. Когда же срок ее службы кончился, старик кузнец сковал ей железные башмаки. Принцесса надела их и поднялась на стеклянную гору. И так легко ей было подниматься, словно гора поросла свежей травой.

Вот принцесса добралась до вершины горы, потом спустилась в долину и направилась к первому же дому. В нем жила старуха прачка со своей единственной дочерью. Принцесса подошла к ее двери, постучалась и попросилась переночевать.

Прачка, безобразная старуха с хитрым и злым лицом, сказала, что пустит ее переночевать, но только если она сумеет выстирать белый плащ Черного Рыцаря Норроуэйского. В нем Черный Рыцарь сражался не на жизнь, а на смерть, и плащ весь покрыт пятнами крови.

– Вчера я целый день старалась отстирать этот плащ, – говорила старуха, – но все без толку. Вечером вынула его из корыта, а пятна как были, так и остались. Может, тебе, девушка, удастся его отмыть. Очень уж мне хочется угодить Черному Рыцарю Норроуэйскому, ведь он – богатый и могущественный властитель.

– А что, Черный Бык Норроуэйский – это не его бык? – спросила принцесса.

Старуха подозрительно посмотрела на нее.

– Черный Бык – это и есть сам Черный Рыцарь, – ответила она. – Когда-то Черного Рыцаря заколдовали – обратили в Черного Быка. И чтобы снова стать человеком, он должен был вызвать на бой и победить могучего Злого Духа,

что жил в темном ущелье. Ну, он сразился со Злым Духом и победил его и опять стал человеком. Вот только ходит слух, будто на него иногда помрачение находит – все говорит про какую-то девушку. Будто он хотел взять ее в жены, да потерял. Но кто она такая, никому не известно. Впрочем, тебе это ни к чему, ты ведь здесь чужая, – добавила прачка, словно пожалев, что сказала лишнее. – Некогда мне с тобой болтать! Хочешь попытаться отмыть плащ, оставайся ночевать, а нет – ступай своей дорогой.

Принцесса, конечно, сказала, что постарается выстирать плащ. И вот не успела она положить плащ в воду, как все пятна на нем исчезли, словно по волшебству, и он стал чистым и белым, как новый.

Старуха прачка обрадовалась, но тут же ее взяло сомнение. Ей показалось, что между Черным Рыцарем и этой девушкой есть какая-то таинственная связь. Ведь сама она, прачка, да и дочь ее, как только ни старались, как ни выбивались из сил, не сумели отмыть плащ. А эта девушка отстирала его сразу.

Черный Рыцарь должен был в тот же вечер прийти к прачке за своим плащом. И вот она надумала сказать ему, что плащ выстирала ее дочь. И старуха посоветовала принцессе поскорее лечь спать, чтобы хорошенько отдохнуть. Принцесса послушалась и уже крепко спала в чулане, когда Черный Рыцарь Норроуэйский пришел к прачке за своим белым плащом.

Надо сказать, что все последние семь лет, с тех самых пор, как он бился в ущелье с Духом Зла, он многих женщин просил выстирать ему плащ. Но ни одна не смогла его отмыть. Тем временем одна вещунья предсказала ему, что та, кто отмоет добела этот плащ, станет его женой, кто бы она ни была – красавица или уродина, старуха или молодая девушка. И жена эта будет ему любящей и верной помощницей.

И вот Черный Рыцарь пришел к прачке и получил обратно свой плащ, белый, как первый снег. Когда же ему сказали, что это дочь прачки отстирала плащ, он решил обвенчаться с ней на другой же день.

Наутро принцесса проснулась и узнала, что Черный Рыцарь приходил сюда, пока она спала, получил плащ и сегодня же обвенчается с дочерью прачки. Тут бедная принцесса чуть не помешалась от горя. Она подумала, что никогда

уже ей не свидеться с Черным Рыцарем. Но вдруг вспомнила про яблоко, которое получила семь долгих лет назад и все это время носила с собой.

"Хуже той беды, в какую я попала теперь, быть не может", – подумала она. Взяла яблоко и разломила его. И что же в нем оказалось? Такие драгоценные самоцветы, каких она в жизни не видывала. Тут принцесса сразу придумала, что ей делать, – вынула из яблока драгоценные камни, высыпала их в свой платок и понесла к прачке.

– Смотри! – сказала она. – Я богаче, чем ты думала. Если хочешь, все эти камни будут твоими.

– А что для этого надо сделать? – спросила старуха.

Она никогда не видела таких драгоценных камней, и глаза у нее загорелись.

– Только отложи на один день свадьбу своей дочери, – ответила принцесса, – и позволь мне нынешней ночью посидеть в спальне Черного Рыцаря, пока он будет спать. Мне давно хочется на него поглядеть.

К ее удивлению, прачка согласилась – очень уж ей хотелось получить самоцветы и разбогатеть. А в просьбе принцессы она не видела ничего опасного для себя и своей дочери. Но она все-таки решила опоить Черного Рыцаря сонным зельем, так чтобы он за всю ночь ни разу не проснулся и не увидел девушки.

И вот прачка взяла самоцветы и убрала их в свой сундук, а свадьбу дочери отложила на один день.

Вечером принцесса вошла в спальню Черного Рыцаря, когда он уже спал. Всю долгую ночь просидела она у его ложа и всю ночь пела песню в надежде, что он проснется и услышит ее. Она пела:

Семь долгих лет я служила ради тебя,
На стеклянную гору всходила ради тебя
И белый твой плащ отмыла ради тебя,
Что же ты не проснешься, не поглядишь на меня?

Она снова и снова пела эту песню, и сердце у нее разрывалось, но он ничего не слышал и даже не шевелился, потому что выпил сонное зелье старой прачки.

На другой день принцесса разломила грушу в надежде, что она поможет ей лучше, чем помогло яблоко. Но в груше она опять нашла только самоцветы, правда еще бо-

лее крупные, чем те, что были в яблоке. Делать нечего. Пришлось ей отнести и эти самоцветы старой прачке.

— Отложи свадьбу еще на один день, — попросила принцесса старуху, — а мне позволь просидеть и эту ночь в спальне Черного Рыцаря.

Прачка согласилась. "Эдак я разбогатею быстро", — подумала она и заперла самоцветы в сундук.

Но все было напрасно! Принцесса всю ночь сидела у ложа Черного Рыцаря и, с нежностью глядя на него, пела:

Семь долгих лет я служила ради тебя,
На стеклянную гору всходила ради тебя
И белый твой плащ отмыла ради тебя,
Что же ты не проснешься, не поглядишь на меня? —

а он лежал неподвижный, как камень, и ничего не слышал.

Наутро принцесса уже почти потеряла надежду. "У меня осталась только слива, и уж если она не поможет, так ничто мне не поможет", — думала она. Дрожащими пальцами она разломила сливу и нашла в ней самоцветы, еще более редкие и драгоценные, чем те, что были в яблоке и груше. Принцесса побежала к прачке и высыпала ей самоцветы на колени.

— Бери! — сказала она. — Только отложи свадьбу еще на один день и позволь мне посидеть в спальне принца еще одну ночь.

Прачка, хоть и очень удивленная, опять согласилась.

А Черному Рыцарю уже надоело ждать свадьбы, и в тот день он поехал на охоту вместе со своими слугами. По дороге слуги стали говорить между собой о том, что их так поразило в прошлые две ночи. Наконец один старик охотник подъехал к Черному Рыцарю и сказал:

— Господин мой, нам очень хотелось бы знать, кто это всю ночь так чудесно поет в твоей спальне?

— Кто поет? — повторил принц Норроуэйский. — Да никто не поет! В спальне моей тихо, как в могиле, а сам я, с тех пор как поселился в этом доме, сплю как убитый и даже во сне ничего не вижу.

Старый охотник покачал головой.

— Нынче вечером, господин мой, — сказал он, — не пей этого напитка, что подает тебе прачка. Тогда и ты услышишь то, что слышали все прочие.

В другое время Черный Рыцарь лишь посмеялся бы над такими бреднями, но в этот день слова старика запали ему в душу, и он послушался совета.

И вот настал вечер. Старуха прачка опять что-то подмешала в кружку эля и принесла сонное зелье Черному Рыцарю. Но он только чуть пригубил и сказал, что питье недостаточно сладко. Старуха пошла в кухню за медом, чтобы подсластить эль. А Черный Рыцарь в это время быстро встал с постели и вылил питье в окошко. Когда же старуха вернулась, он сказал, что уже выпил всю чашку.

И в ту ночь он не заснул. Он услышал, как принцесса вошла в спальню и как она запела свою жалобную песню:

Семь долгих лет я служила ради тебя,
На стеклянную гору всходила ради тебя
И белый твой плащ отмыла ради тебя,
Что же ты не проснешься, не поглядишь на меня?

А когда услышал, вспомнил все. Он вскочил, обнял и поцеловал принцессу и попросил ее рассказать про все, что с нею приключилось с тех пор, как они расстались. Принцесса рассказала, и тогда принц так рассердился на старуху прачку и ее обманщицу-дочь, что выгнал их из своих владений. Потом он женился на принцессе, и они всю жизнь жили счастливо.

ИСТОЧНИК НА КРАЮ СВЕТА

В доброе старое время — а оно и в самом деле было доброе время, хотя было то не мое время и не ваше время, да и ничье время, — жила на свете девушка. Мать у нее умерла, и отец женился на другой. Мачеха возненавидела падчерицу за то, что девушка была красивей, чем она, держала ее в черном теле, заставляла выполнять всю черную работу по дому и ни на

миг не оставляла в покое. Наконец она решила и совсем от нее избавиться. Подала девушке решето и сказала:

— Ступай, набери в это решето воды из источника, что на краю света. Да принеси решето полнехоньким, а не то плохо тебе придется!

Мачеха думала, что девушке ни за что не найти источника на краю света, а если и найдет, так разве донесет она воду в решете?

И вот девушка отправилась в путь и каждого встречного спрашивала, где тот источник, что на краю света? Но никто этого не знал, и она все думала да гадала, как ей быть.

Наконец какая-то диковинная старушка, что плелась согнувшись в три погибели, показала ей дорогу на край света и объяснила, как туда добраться.

Девушка послушалась старушку и дошла-таки до источника на краю света. Но только она зачерпнула решетом студеной-престуденой воды, как вся вода вытекла. Девушка опять набрала воды в решето, и еще много раз набирала, но вода всякий раз выпивалась, так что под конец бедняжка села на землю и залилась горючими слезами.

И вдруг она услышала кваканье. Подняла голову и увидела большую лягушку. Лягушка уставилась на девушку, выпучив глаза, и спросила:

— Что случилось, милая?

— Ах, я бедная, бедная! — сказала девушка. — Мачеха заслала меня в этакую даль и велела набрать в решето воды из источника на краю света, а я не могу.

— Вот что, — сказала лягушка, — обещай исполнять все мои приказания целую ночь — с вечера и до утра, и я научу тебя, как набрать воды в решето.

Девушка согласилась, и лягушка сказала:

Глиной обмажь его, выложи мхом,
И принесешь в нем воду в свой дом.

А потом — прыг-скок — ускакала и плюхнулась прямо в источник на краю света.

Девушка нарвала мха, выстлала им дно решета, обмазала все решето глиной и опустила его в источник на краю света. На этот раз вода не убежала из решета, и девушка хотела уж идти домой, как вдруг лягушка высунула голову из источника на краю света и проквакала:

– Так помни, что обещала!

– Хорошо, – ответила девушка.

А сама подумала: "Что плохого может мне сделать какая-то лягушка!"

Вот вернулась она к мачехе с решетом, полным воды из источника на краю света. Мачеха чуть не лопнула от злости, но ни слова не сказала.

В тот же вечер девушка услышала тихий стук в дверь у самого пола – тук-тук-тук – и чей-то голос:

Дверь мне открой, о прелесть моя,
Дверь мне открой, дорогая!
Вспомни, дружочек, что говорили мы
На краю света, возле источника!

– Что это значит?! – вскричала мачеха, и девушке пришлось рассказать ей обо всем, что с ней было, и о том, какое обещание она дала лягушке.

– Девушки должны выполнять свои обещания! – сказала мачеха. – Ступай сейчас же открой дверь!

Она была рада-радешенька, что падчерице придется повиноваться какой-то мерзкой лягушке.

Девушка встала, открыла дверь, видит – за дверью лягушка из источника на краю света. Прыг-прыг, скок-скок – и вот лягушка подскочила к девушке и проквакала:

Возьми на колени, прелесть моя,
Возьми меня, дорогая!
Вспомни скорее, что говорили мы
На краю света, возле источника!

Не хотелось девушке сажать к себе на колени лягушку, но мачеха приказала:

– Сейчас же возьми ее, дерзкая девчонка! Девушки должны выполнять свои обещания!

Пришлось девушке посадить лягушку к себе на колени.

А та посидела-посидела, да и попросила:

Дай мне поесть, о прелесть моя,
Дай мне поесть, дорогая!
Вспомни скорее, что говорили мы
На краю света, возле источника!

Эту просьбу девушка выполнила охотно — принесла хлеба, кувшин молока и досыта накормила лягушку. А лягушка наелась и говорит:

Ляг со мной спать, о прелесть моя,
Ляг со мной спать, дорогая!
Вспомни, дружочек, что говорила ты,
Когда устала так возле источника!

Тут уж девушка возмутилась. Но мачеха сказала сердито:

— Давши слово — держись! Девушки должны выполнять свои обещания! Делай что велят или убирайся отсюда вместе со своей лягушонкой!

И вот девушка взяла лягушку с собой в постель, но положила ее как можно дальше от себя. А когда занялся день, лягушка сказала ей:

Руби мне голову, прелесть моя!
Руби скорей, дорогая!
Вспомни, дружочек, что обещала ты
Там, на лужайке возле источника!

Девушка сначала отказалась — ведь она помнила, как помогла ей лягушка у источника на краю света. Но лягушка повторила свою просьбу. Тогда девушка пошла за топором и отрубила ей голову. И вдруг — о чудо! — перед ней предстал молодой прекрасный принц. Он поведал девушке о том, как злой волшебник заколдовал его, и добавил:

— Расколдовать меня могла только та девушка, что согласилась бы исполнять все мои приказания целую ночь — с вечера и до утра, а утром отрубила бы мне голову.

Ну и удивилась мачеха, увидев вместо мерзкой лягушки молодого принца! И уж поверьте мне, не по душе ей пришлось, когда принц сказал, что хочет жениться на ее падчерице за то, что она освободила его от злых чар.

Но они все равно обвенчались и поселились в замке.

А мачехе осталось утешаться тем, что, не будь ее, падчерица никогда бы не вышла замуж за принца.

Commentary

THE LANGUAGE OF THE TALES

Nowhere is the people's voice better preserved than in folk tale; and stories told in the original dialect constitute the main criterion for admission to this volume. After all, dialect is a survival of our original heritage of speech—simple in form and expression of thought, and far less subject to the changes in pronunciation and idiom that affect our 'cultured' speech. There is a delightful richness and robustness about the dialect of Cornwall and Lincolnshire, Ireland and Yorkshire, the Orkneys and East Anglia, in both word and speech, which is often lacking in modern 'standardised' English.

Each area of these islands preserves much in language of its chequered past. Yorkshire speech, for example, has survived from Anglo-Saxon times and the Norse occupation. Cornwall keeps much of its Celtic heritage, even though the Cornish tongue has been dead since the passing of Dolly Pentreath in 1778 at the age of 102. Like much of the rest of Britain and Ireland, the Cornish suffered the Roman invasion, then that of the Saxons who drove them beyond the River Tamar; the new conquerors diffused their customs and religion all the way to Land's End. Then Dane followed Saxon, followed by Norman conquerors who eventually took possession of the land. All the same, despite the traces of Roman and Saxon, Danish and Norman civilisations, the Celtic beliefs have lingered on in word, custom and folktale.

By contrast to most of England, North Lincolnshire has retained much that has decayed elsewhere. The speech sounds strange to a modern English ear, for it is almost pure Saxon, and keeps many of the original inflections which the rest of us have lost. Certainly it bears signs of the many races that have dwelt in the region, with many Norse and Danish words, some Roman and Norman names, even though in common speech, French and Latin derivatives are largely absent.

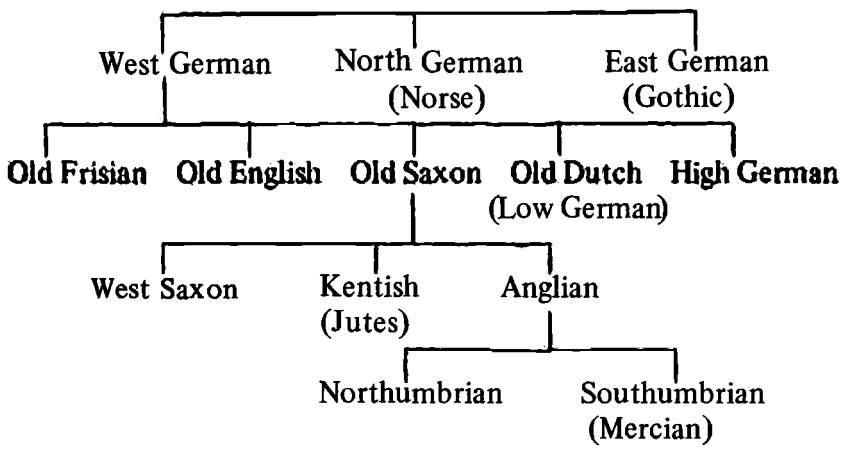
The language of all but one of the Scottish tales in this collection, including those of the Orkneys, is that of Lowland Scotland or Scots. Apart from the poetry of Burns and MacDiarmid, as well as the folktales, it has few monuments. In origin it is the speech of the Anglian settlers of the province of Northumbria which once extended from York to Edinburgh. It is therefore fundamentally an *English* dialect. Later in the Middle Ages, the Scots speech spread north to the Highland line, over the north-eastern coastal plain, and into Orkney and Shetland, and this was as far as it went. Northwest of the Highland line, Gaelic was still spoken; and when Gaelic declined it was replaced by a speech more akin to standard English than to

Lowland Scots. The tales included here, then, are almost entirely confined to the area of Lowland Scotland. As Hannah Aitken has put it, 'it is a less well-known world than the Highland one of kilts and claymores, heather and mountains, and its language is rapidly passing out of use. In both these senses it is our forgotten heritage.'[1]

As to the Orkneys, once a Norwegian province until the late 15th Century and once with their own language, the Norn which died out in the 17th Century, the language is now Lowland Scots, but despite the disintegrating effect on the oral lore of the islands caused by Scottification, the folktale dialect is richly permeated by Norn words, as in the fine example of Orkney speech 'The Selkie that Deud no' Forget.'

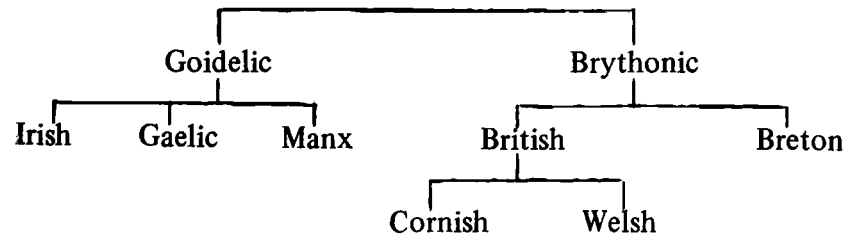
The table below gives some notion of the formation of dialect over a period that produced the Germanic languages relevant to our tales.

GERMANIC



The Irish, Welsh, Highland and Manx folktales have been translated from the original as faithfully as readable narrative allows. The Celtic family tree is shown below.

CELTIC



[1] Hannah Aitken, *A Forgotten Heritage* (Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh, 1974), p. 153.

How close the Celtic dialects are is testified to by the Scottish folklorist Lord Campbell of Islay, who could, 'converse freely in Lorn Gaelic with Scotch Highlanders in every district of Scotland, and with natives of Rathlin. I can make my way with the natives of some Irish districts. I could not make the Manxman understand me, but I can readily understand most of the words in Manx and in Irish, when pronounced separately. There are a very great many words in Welsh and Breton which I can understand, or trace when they are separately spoken, but the difference in these is much wider.'[1]

Wherever possible in the text, I have presented extracts from these languages to give the flavour of the original, and I have given the stories as near as possible to the dialect of their birthplace. For the benefit of the reader, this has necessitated glossary, for sadly, many words have slipped out of vogue.

GLOSSARY

a' – he; she
aar – our
aat – out
abeun – above
a'body – anybody, everybody
acrost – across
addled – gained
advinthur – adventure
ae(n) – one
aff – off
afooar – before
afore – before
age'an – again
agur – ague
ah – I
ahint – behind
ahterwuds – afterwards
aich – each
'aid – head
ai(r)n – own
airly – early
airth – earth
aisy – easy
allus – always
am'at – am not
ance – once
anders – everything
ane – one
'ankerin' – hanckering
ap – up
are – ear
Arndel – Arundel
arsy-varsey – back to front
arter – after
'atch – hatch
a'thegither – altogether
atter – after
atween – between
auld – old
auver – over
awa – away
aweel – well; awhile
awn – on
awre – over
ax(t) – ask(ed)
'ay – hay
ayont – in front of
azac'ly – exactly

baan – about
backy – tobacco
badder – worse
bag-puddin' – pease pudding
baid(rume) – bed(room)
b'aint – aren't
baith – both
bane – bean
bargest – goblin
baskit – basket
bast – beast
bate – beat(en)
baust – burst

[1] J. F. Campbell, *Popular Tales of the West Highlands* (Alexander Gardner, Edinburgh, 1890), p. CXXI.

beaut – except
begor – By God
begum – Oh dear!
behappen – perhaps
beild – shelter, hut
bekase – because
bellering – bellowing
ben – burst; inside
betune – between
beyant – beyond
bide – stay, dwell, stand
bif – beef
biggin – cottage
bimeby, bi'mby – by and by
bin – been
binjean – curds and whey
bit – but
bith' – by
blatterin' – battering
blu(i)d – blood
boan – bone
bod – very; but
bodack – clown
Bogey – the Devil
booat – boat
boogies – hobgoblins
'boot – about
bor – boy
boreen – bane
bothy – body, human being
boune – bound
boutin – truss
bowlin' – boiling
brae – hillside
brak – broke
brawly – well
breeks – trousers
bren-cheese – bread and cheese
breet – bright
brig – bridge
briled – fried
brither – brother
broodlin' – sad
brose – oatmeal porridge
browt – brought
brudge – bridge
bruin – brown
brunt – burned
bud – but
buddo – my dear
bugganes – evil spirits
bunnat – bonnet
bunnock – bannock
burries – burrows
buryhole – grave
butt – bottom
bway – boy

ca' – call
cabby – cheating
cadlock – charlock, wild radish
cakey – silly
cantle – corner
capped – scared
capt' – scared
cars – marshes
cauld – cold
ceilidhe – party, evening visit
cem – come
'cep(s) – except
ceurious – curious
chaney – china
chap – chop
chiel – child
chimbly – chimney
choild – child
clamb – climbed
clapt – banged; set
clarty – muddy
clespid – clasped
climmer – climb
cliver – clever
closs – close
clouts – clothes
clue – clew
cojer – food
collop – portion
concate – consider
consarnin' – concerning
con't – can't
coo – cow
cooatie – little coat
cool – coal
copped – threw
corrie crisosag – dry old beetle
co't – coat
cotted – matted
cou(l)d – cold
craddled – went bad
cra(e)ter – creature
craft – croft, fold
crappelin' – creeping

crass – cross
cra(y)thur – creature
crogan – limpet shell
crooning – bellowing
cruell'd – crewelled, embroidered
cruked – crooked
crum – small particle
crysom – creature
cubby – creel, basket
cud – could
cuirn – mountain ash
cuisten down – defeated
cum – come
cump'ny – company
cunyo – corner
cuss – curse
cuttit – cut

daan – down
daat – doubt
dacint – decent
daeth – death
dam – damn
dar – day
darklins – darkness
darter – daughter
dat – that
dazz'd – dazzled, darned
de – the
dee – die; day
deean – dying
deed – dead
delvin – digging
deud – did
deus – does
dewin' – doting
dey – they
dezzeaway – thereabouts
dhrame – dream
dimsy – dim
dingers – bangers
dinna – don't
dirackly – directly
disna – don't
dissn' – don't
div – do
djeth – death
doan'el – don't you
dochter – daughter
dodde – walk
dole – complain
dollerin' – complaining
dookid – dived
doorsil(l) – doorstep
drap – drop
dree – three
droight – draught
droo – through
drowed – threw
dru – through
druffen – drunken
du – do
dubbersome – doubtful
Duchies – Dutchmen
du'd – done
dudeen – short clay pipe
dung doon – dead, disappeared
dunnamuch – don't know how much
dusn't – don't
dwined – died

ebb – seashore
'ee – you
een – in; eyes
e'enin' – evening
ef – if
elenge – dreary
elevener – elevenses
ellum – elm
'en – him, it, them
'endlins – finally
enow – enough
ens – hens
eppern – apron
'er – he; have
'erzel – herself
'es – has, have
ess – yes; ash
Etin – Giant
evens – evening
ext – asked

fa' – fall
fable – feeble
fae – from
fairisee – fairy
faix – faith
f'and – found
fared – feard
farer – farther
feeman' – streaming
feeorin – fairies

fel'en – feeling
fetch – fate
fett – fetch
feyther – father
figgie hobbin – suet pudding
fin' – find
fit – foot
flaycrow – scarecrow
flay – scare
flech – flea
flure – floor
flittering – flickering
flow'd – flowed
fo'ak – folk
foine – fine
follery – foolishness
follyin' – following
foremint – in front of
forrad – forward
fost – first
fot – fetched
fou'd – flowed
fower – four
fowk – folk
framin' – pretending
fratched – angry
fray – from
freetn'd – frightened
frimicken' – searching
froughten – frightened
frum – from
fule – fool
fullishness – foolishness
furder – farther
furst – first
fust – first

gae – give
gaed – went
gainest – nearest
gainhand – nearby
gallitrap – fairly ring
galushon – delusion
gan – go
gang – went
gard – gravel
garth – yard
garthers – garters
gat – got
gate – path
gatless – useless
gaun – going
geen – gone
gerrin' – getting
Gerston – Grassington
gert – big
geud – good; God
gey(an) – very
gied – gave
gi'ein – giving
giense – party
gin – if
gingey – ginger
ginnerly – generally
girt – big
gode'en – good evening
golloping – greedily drinking
gonned – gave
goo – go
goose – smoothing iron
Gorsty Bonk – Gorsey Bank
gostherin – gossiping
gowden – golden
graih veen – little dear
gran'ther – grandfather
grat – wept
grate – great
gray – grey
greet – weep
grottle – trottle
groun – grown
grummles – grumbles
gude – good
guid – good
gurt – big
guv – given
gwain – going
gweans – periwinkles, scallops

haa – how
hae – have
haena – haven't
haff – half
haggart – farm stockyard
haith – heather, heath
hame – home
han't – haven't
hape – heap
ha'porth – halfpenny-worth
happen – probably
hapt – wrapped
hare – hear

hauf – half
haythen – heathen
he'ad – head
heaw – how
hee(a)m – home
hem – hell
henches – haunches, hips
hep – heap
hev – have
he've – he has
hicher – higher
hid – higher
hid – head
hinnie – honey
hissel' – himself; itself
hissen – himself; itself
hod-me-dod – snail
hoky – holy
hola – shout
hoo – how
hope – help
horders – orders
horrud – horrid
hort – hurt
hot – hit
hould – hold
hout – listen
how – hollow
howm'even – however
howsiver – however
howsomediver – however
howsum(d)ever – however
hunkers – haunches
hunner – hundred
hup' – hope
huz – us
hyter sprite – good spirit

idaya – idea
ilk(a) – every, each
imply – employ
ingleside – fireside
interdoose – introduce
Iscariot – purple
iss – yes
iver – ever

Jeems – James
jest – just
jimmy – sprightly
jinkit – eluded

kaims – combs
keek – glance
keine – glow
kentna – didn't know
kep – keep; intercept
ketch – catch
kewrious – curious
kippeen – twig
kitch – catch
kittlin – kitten
kow – cow
kye – cattle

laffin' – laughing
laich – low
laips – lips
lang – long
lanin' – learning
lar – lay
larn – learn
larted – laughed
laste – least
lave – leave
law – lord
lawbrod – board on which the tailor irons out seams
led's – let's
leet – light
lemme – let me
leprechaun – fairy shoemaker
leukan – looking
leven – eleven
licker – liquor, beer
lickle – little
liddle – little
liggin' – lying
ligs – lies
lile – little
limpetty – lame
lispin' – whispering
lispit – whispered
'llowed – allowed, confessed
loike – like
loile – little
loin – lain
lookit – looked
loup – drop
lu(i)k – look
lumberment – harm
lungest – longest
Lunnon – London

lusmore – foxglove
lyan' – lying

ma – my
main – quite; lot
mair – more
maist – most(ly)
mander – bit
mappen – perhaps
marlock – meeting place
marn – man
marn't – mustn't
marra – marrow
marrow – mate
masel' – myself
mate – food
maw'r – girl
mawther – girl
mayhap – perhaps
measter – mastėr
mebbee – maybe
meed – made
meen – groan
megs – paws, flippers
met – might
min, min' – remember; them
mind – remember
miny – many
misremember – forget
mit – met
mitch – much
mither – mother
mixey-miery – muddy
moar – more
molds – loose earth
moocky – mucky
mooin – moon
mon – might; man
monny – many
morren – morning
mort – pile, great number
mortal – very
motty – bit
mout – might
mowt – might
muckle – large
mun – must, may; man
murtherin – murderous
mysen – myself

nae – no
nah – now
nancient – ancient
nate – neat
naun – nothing
nayther – neither
neaw – now
neet – night
nestletripe – young pig
neuk – nick
niest – nearest
n'ise – noise
nobbut – nothing but
noboclish – never mind
nocht – nothing
nod – not
noo – now
nooan – not
noos an' dans – now and then
nor – than
nort – nothing
norther – neither
nowt – nothing
nubry – nobody
'nuff – enough
nuss'd – nursed
nuss lamb – orphan
nuther – neither

o' – of
ocashion – occasion
ochone – alas
oies – eyes
Old 'Un – the Devil
ole – old
ol(l) us(s) – always
omedhaun – fool
oneasy – uneasy
onlucky – troublesome
on-natral – unnatural
onny – only
onst – once
ony – any
ooman – woman
oon't – wouldn't
oot – out
ootflow – isolated
op'um – opium
ord'nar – ordinary
ort – anything
oughter – ought to
'ouze – house
ov – of

overmire – evermore
owd – old
owd chap – the Devil
ower – very; over
owre – over
owt fresh? – anything new?

pace – peace
packman – pedlar
pack'oss – packhorse
pad – path
paddo – frog
pais – peas
pantamine – pantomime
parritch time – breakfast
paspiration – perspiration
pass – place
passon – parson
pat – a small lump
peace – piece
peeark – perch
peerie – little
peetif' – pitiful
pellar – wise man
peppaw – pepper
perlite – polite
persave – perceive
picther – picture
piggen – earthen jar
pilt – pelt
pink – smell
pinkeen – minnow
piskies – pixies
plain – long piece of woollen cloth
planchin' – planks, floor
plegged – plagued
'pon – upon
poocas – fairies
pore – poor
pot(hoile) – hole, pot-hole
pother – brother
pottheen – homebrew
pottle – bottle
pownie – pony
prensley – presently
prentice – apprentice
public – pub
pudden – pudding
puddock – frog
puir – crafty
pullan – rock-pool
purtind – pretend
purty – pretty
pyewipe – lapwing

quare – queer
quarly – quarrel
quill – a hollow stem or reed
quite – quiet
quo' – quoth

rade – rode
rader – rather
raivival – revival
rakin' – trusting
rale(y) – real(ly)
rann – rhyme
rare – cross
rase – rose
rayson – reason
raythe r – rather
reet – right
relow – rely; allow
retermine – determine
rhines – large open ditches
rid-'aided – red-headed
riddy – ready
ridlesses – riddles
right-sided – set things right
rin – run
riz – rose
root – roaring
rousing – roaring
rowl – roll
rowling – rolling

sadernoon – this afternoon
sae – so
saggyrt – sage
sair – sore, bitter; strong
sairly – surely
sarcumstance – circumstance
sark – shirt
sarra – excellent
s'ar – star
sartain – certain
sarve – serve
saut – salt
scad – shower
scarting – scraping
scaud – scaly
scoprell – squirrel

scroggy – bushy
scupping – knocking
seawk – suck
seben – seven
seed – saw
seet – sight
selkie – seal
sen – said
sence – since
ses – says
seuner – sooner
seur – sure
sewerly – surely
sez – says
sheu – she
shewd – should
shillin' – shelling
shoon – shoes
shoo's – she has
shorn't – shan't
shouther – shoulder
showldher – shoulder
shuwther – shoulder
sic – such
sich – sight; such
sidden – saw
sides – besides
siller – silver
sin – seen
sivver – several
skeered – scared
skeerful – scary
skivets – fire-shovels
sma' – small
smoorl't – caught
snare – stare
sneepit – wither
snirp – shrivel
sodger – soldier
sojre – soldier
someat – something
sooart – sort
sook – suck
soop – drink
sora – sorry
sovrin – sovereign
sowens – thin broth
sown – shelter
sowt – sought
span – spun
spanneling – swimming
spavin – a lot
spec'itals – spectacles
'speriment – experiment
sperrit – spirit
spile – draw liquid
spotch – seek
spunes – spoons, shovels
squat – quiet
stack fire – bonfire
stane – stone
steek – shut, lock
steen – stone
steud – stood
sthrame – stream
sthreelin' – streaming
stick-lick – beat
'stids – instead
ston – stand
stooan – stone
stoup – pail
stout – drunk
stra'cht – straight
strah – straw
strook – struck
stuid – stood
sud – should
suent – docile
summat – something
suthin' – something
swiddie – blacksmith

t' – the
tae – one
taid – toad
tap – top
'tasn't – it has not
taters – potatoes
taties – potatoes
tay – tea
teu – too
teuk – took
tew – two; too
tez – take
tha – you
thaccy – thicky; that
thack – thatched
theze – this
thisen – yourself
thoff – although
thoosen' – thousand
thort – thought

thowt – thought
thrack – track
thraneen – straw, scrap
throng – plentiful
throt – trot
thruff – through
tichin' – touching
tiddy – little
tiddy oggy – Cornish pasty
timber – tug-barge
tirled – tapped
tither – other
to an' fraw – to and fro
toart – towards
tode – told
todlowries – water spirits
toe-wards – towards
toime – time
topping – head
toud – told
to wance – at once
towanst – at once
towlin' – tolling
tramman tree – elder tree
traw – tray; through
traycle – treacle
trimble – tremble
trink – channel, sea
troth – truth
tu – two
tuk – took
tung – tongue
'twadn't – it wasn't
twae – two
'twant – it won't be
'twarn't – it weren't
'twaunt – it wasn't
twelmont – twelve months
'twor – it was

'ud – would
ugsome – ugly
'ull – will
um – them
un – him; one
unhapped – made unhappy

val' – fall
var(r)a – very
vars – far as
veed – feed
veet – feet
veller – fellow
venses – fens
vind – find
vittals – victuals
vlat – flat
vlothered – excited
volk – folk
vore – up
voreward – forward
vute – foot

wad – what; would; wade
wadna – wouldn't
wae – woe
waggabone – vagabond
wagrant – vagrant
waik – weak
wake – weak
wal – well
wan – one
wanst – once
war – way
wark – work
warld – world
warse't – escaped
wauken – waken
weel – well
weskit – waistcoat
wey – with
wha(u)r – where
whips-while – a little while
whoame – home
wick – swift
widdershins – wrong way round, unlucky
widdy – widow
wilks' – whelks
tha-Wykes – the wisp
wimmen – women
wimmin – women
win' – wind
winder – window
winna – won't
winnock – window
winnot – won't
wis – was
wisht – dreary, dismal
wiss – wish
wod – would
wodever – whatever

wor – was
wun – were; went
wunst – once
wunyerd – pathway
wurreld – world
wus – was; worse
wuts – oats
wuz – was

yaller – yellow
yar – your
yedless – headless
yell cow – cow that no longer gives milk
ye'ppin' – yelping
yer – here
yerd – heard
yew – you
yir – your
yo – you
yoi – yes
yu – you

zart-'aided – thick-headed
Zennor – old name for Cornwall
zo – so
zore – sore
zot – set
Zummerzet – Somerset
zummin' – something
Zuneday – Sunday
zune – soon
zylum – mental asylum

TELLING OF THE TALES

An English recording of the tales told by the storytellers of the past provides only a pale shadow of the original narration. The voices, with their many modulations, fall silent on the printed page; the audience is absent. Only the pattern of narrative and the procession of motifs remain. This is especially true of translations.

One of the most striking differences between modern storytelling and the old folktales is that in the latter the folktale was often wedded to music. This was especially so in Ireland: whenever a notable event occurred, a folk song was composed or, rather, improvised, to celebrate it. In many Irish villages, there was until fairly recently a trained traditional bard who had a gift of producing rhymed tales, often in song and in elaborate verse forms–far more elaborate than those in modern English–on the inspiration of the moment. Such inspired poetry is quite different from that written down by contemporary poets and storytellers, printed, published and read in silence by individual purchasers. Our stories are a written art, demanding a higher degree of thought than common speech.

We should bear in mind that this aspect of modern story-writing is utterly modern. In days gone by, the storyteller was not divided from his audience by the barrier of literacy. His or her language differed from common speech, but it was a spoken language, common to all. The storyteller was more fluent in it than they were, largely because he had had more practice. But, to some extent, they were all bards; one could not draw a sharp line between the professional storyteller and the rest of the community. It was only a matter of degree. Hence the anonymity of most popular tales. Generated spontaneously out of every-

day experience, they passed, ever changing, from mouth to mouth, from parents to children, until the faculty of improvisation decays. Only then does it become fixed, yet even then it preserves a distinctive quality—that of conscious art. That is just the point: it lacks the stamp of an individual personality; and inevitably so, for it is the product not of an individual but of a community.

How essential the storyteller was to the close-knit rural communities of days gone by is attested to by the Scottish gamekeeper Hector Urquhart in 1860, 'In my native place, Pool-Ewe, Rosshire, when I was a boy, it was the custom for the young to assemble together on the long winter nights to hear the old people recite the tales or *sgeulachd*, which they had learned from their fathers before them. In those days tailors and shoemakers went from house to house, making our clothes and shoes. When one of them came to the village we were greatly delighted, whilst getting new kilts at the same time. I knew an old tailor who used to tell a new tale every night during his stay in the village; and another, an old shoemaker, who, with his large stock of stories about ghosts and fairies, used to frighten us so much that we scarcely dared pass the neighbouring churchyard on our way home. It was also the custom when an *aoidh*, or stranger, celebrated for his store of tales, came on a visit to the village, for us, young and old, to make a rush for the house where he passed the night, and choose our seats, some on beds, some on forms, and others on three-legged stools, etc., and listen in silence to the new tales... It was also the custom to put riddles, in the solving of which all in the house had to tax their ingenuity.'[1]

At the other end of the land, the wandering minstrel, storyteller, *pellar* (conjuror) and newsmonger was also once an established institution amongst the Cornish people. Here is Robert Hunt, even earlier than Urquhart, telling of the storytellers he remembered as a boy, 'The only wandering droll-teller whom I well remember was an old blind man from the parish of Cury... The old man had been a soldier in his youth, and had a small pension at the time he went over the country, accompanied by a boy and dog. He neither begged nor offered anything for sale, but was sure of a welcome to bed and board in every house he called at. He would seldom stop in the same house more than one night, not because he had exhausted his stories, or 'eaten his welcome', but because it required all his time to visit his acquaintances once in the year... I have a dim recollection of another old droll-teller, called Billy Frost, in St. Just, who used to go round to the feasts in the neighbouring parishes, and be well entertained at the public-houses for the sake of his drolls. In 1829 there still existed two of these droll-tellers, and from them were obtained a few of the stories here preserved (in his

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. VI-VII.

Popular Romances of the West of England–J. R.)'[1]

A century later in Ireland, Kevin Danaher, recalls, 'When I was a child in County Limerick in the 1920s the ancient art of storytelling was already dying out. But there still were old people who knew the old stories, and although they seldom could claim an audience around the winter fire such as they themselves had known when they heard the tales from their old people fifty or sixty years earlier, they were always ready to heed a child's request for a story, and they provided us with many happy hours of wonder and of laughter.'[2]

Another Irishman, Sean O'Sullivan, writing in the 1960s, records that, 'although there are still thousands of people in Ireland who can tell stories of many kinds, the need and the occasions for telling them are quickly passing. The fireside scene of former years, lighted by only the peat fire or an oil lamp, is now illuminated by electricity, while a newspaper, a radio, or a television set is not far away. Tales are now rarely, if ever, told at wakes or in fishing boats. The traveling beggar, who was formerly welcomed in every parish for his tales as well as for the news he brought from other districts, has almost completely disappeared from the roads. The *spalpeen* (storyteller–*J. R.*) no longer travels (except from Connacht and Donegal to England and Scotland) to plant the crops or save the harvest, bringing back with him stories of his adventures as well as newly-acquired folktales. Very soon, memories of Irish storytelling on the grand scale will be found only in recordings and books.'[3]

In the sheltered areas of Britain, storytelling also lingered on into the present century. In the Fens of Cambridgeshire and Norfolk, for example, W. H. Barrett tells us that the best storytellers, past masters in the art of storytelling, were untutored and unread, having been reared in an age long before the Education Act of 1870.[4]

'Each one was a storehouse of folklore stories, many of which had been handed down from generation to generation, told and retold in the days when listeners sat enthralled by what was, more or less, their only means of recreation... The cream of the stories which I heard were told on Saturday nights at the Ship Inn near my home in Brandon Creek. Here one adept in the art

[1] Robert Hunt, *Popular Romances of the West of England* (Chatto and Windus, London, 1865), pp. 26-27.

[2] Kevin Danaher, *Folktales of the Irish Countryside* (The Mercier Press, Cork, 1967), p. 8.

[3] Sean O'Sullivan. *Folktales of Ireland* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1966), p. XXXVII.

[4] The Education Act of 1870 provided universal elementary education for British children, but only in standard English. From this moment the 'vulgar' tongue and dialect (and separate languages, such as Welsh, Scottish and Irish) of the common people began to decline.

of entertaining his fellow men would be sure of free beer, with an ounce of shag thrown in.'[1]

The last of the old Fen tigers, Chafer Legge, died at the turn of the century.

Thus it was, at the latest, just within this century that folklore ceased to be an everyday force in rural life. Once it governed the smallest act in every home, farm and village, giving rules and rituals for the performance of daily work, the safeguarding of family, farm and possessions. Families lived in the same country parishes for generations, spent their lives watching the plough transform the soil, the growing wheat that followed and, at the end, the richness of their harvest. This unchanging rhythm of life and labour set the pattern for pastoral festivals. Here is an old Gloucestershire labourer writing in 1898, 'Fifty years ago there was four feasts in the year for us folks. First of all there was the sowers' feast—that would be about the end of April; then came the sheep-shearers' feast—there'd be about fifteen of us as would sit down after sheep-shearing, and we'd be singing best part of the night, and plenty to eat and drink; next came the feast for the reapers, when the corn was cut about August; and, last of all, the harvest home in September.'[2]

This country calendar welded the tightly-knit community into a common social pattern; everyone belonged.

Young people today would find it hard to comprehend that even the longest winter evening, stretching into the small hours of the morning, was too short for the entertainment which people were able to provide for themselves in the past, with singing, music and dancing, with cards and indoor games, with good talk and discussion around the fire, and with storytelling. Not that all these diversions would be afoot on the same evening or in the same house. But in every country parish and village it was known that there were certain houses where a few of the older people would gather 'to draw down old times' and entertain the company with traditions of former days and with stories handed down by word of mouth from a past so distant that the scholars of today can only guess at its antiquity.

Since the great bulk of the rural population could neither read nor write, their memories were very keen, and when they heard a story they often remembered it almost word for word for the rest of their lives. As Barrett writes about the Fen storytellers, 'To those who want to know how an old man, having passed his allotted span, can remember the tales he heard as a boy, I offer this explanation. Having left school at 11 years of age, my brain was not cluttered up with a lot of facts and figures. So, during the first years of my working life, when out in the isolated areas of the Fens, crow-scaring or sheep-tending,

[1] W. H. Barrett, *Tales from the Fens* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1963), p. IX.

[2] Margaret Baker, *Folklore and Customs of Rural England* (David and Charles, 1974), p. 8.

I cased the loneliness by memorising the tales I had heard the old men tell of Fenland's past.'[1]

In this way legends were passed on for hundreds of years with the main points of the tale remaining unaltered, but often gaining a wealth of colourful detail.

THE CONTENT OF THE TALES

A rich mixture simmered in the folktale cauldron. History and pre-history went into it; old festivals and famines; the doings of druids, giants, fairies, saints, soldiers, shepherds, miners, fishermen and kings; the shape of the land, the prevailing weather, the rhythms of speech, the country humour. Added to this local brew are bits and pieces from far afield, brought by Flemish and German traders, Norwegian and Danish adventurers, Dutch delvers who came to drain the Fens, and the intermixture of Irish and Welsh, Cornish and Scots, Tykes (Yorkshiremen), Geordies (North East around Newcastle), Hogs (Hampshire Folk) and the rest. As time went on, the tales multiplied, weaving themselves into daily life and thought, adapted to local conditions and the experience of the listeners. A study of the tales can shed valuable light on the development of language and the history of human ideas; few sources can bring the past so spontaneously to the present.

If we lift the curtain on the past, for example, outmoded social conditions come to life when an old Lincolnshire woman takes us over the marshy Cars to observe the offerings to Tiddy Mun. And no history book could compete with the eye-witness account of the Dartmoor farmhouse and its dwellers in 'Jan Coo', or the sheepdog and shepherd training in 'Jacky-my-Lantern', or 'life downstairs' for a Gypsy serving-girl in 'Mossycoat', or life in the poorhouse for the old biddies in 'How Oud Polly Gorst Cum Agin'.

These tales formed part of the driving force of the countryside in bygone days, not cherished out of quaint nostalgia, but as the collective wisdom of the community, and constantly employed in day-to-day activity.

The Industrial Revolution began the break-up of the old ways. Railways brought relatively cheap and easy travel to a people once dependent upon horse and carrier's cart. No longer were countryfolk confined, often for a lifetime, to one group of villages, one market town, or a solitary northern dale. The Enclosure Movement and farm mechanisation from the 18th Century onwards, and the decline in British agriculture from about 1875, with the consequent reduction in the farm labour-force, made country folk look outside their villages for employment and drift to the towns or, in the case of Ireland, to Brit-

[1] Barrett, *ibid.*

ain. The Education Acts of 1870 and 1902 made literacy a commonplace, with an accompanying demand for books, newspapers and postal services, and a broadening of experience.

As the 20th Century advanced, the pattern continued, the first country buses and cars appeared, destroying the old attachment to place; teachers with unfamiliar accents and fresh ideas took over the village schools. The two world wars brought forced population movements, and the arrival of telephone, radio and TV completed the release of the village from its formal social isolation. Despite a tendency among countryfolk to paint a rosier picture of the 'good old days' than the facts sustain, there was generally little regret for the passing of a period of unremitting toil, poverty, hunger, chronic illness and exploitation by the great estates with their near-feudal administration.

Popular literature too was affected by the decay; but its demise was hurried on by certain other factors. As Hector MacLean says of the villagers of North Uist and Harris, 'Their tales are nearly gone and this, I believe, to be owing partly to reading which, in a manner, supplies a substitute for them, partly to bigoted religious ideas, and partly to narrow utilitarian views.'[1]

This was written in the mid-nineteenth century. By today, even in outposts like the northern Highlands, the oral tales as recounted by the old storytellers are mostly gone forever.

While we may not grieve overmuch for the passing of many features of old village life, the loss of their folktales leaves a serious gap in the British heritage. The foreign tales and the literary confections are no real substitute; for however great their merits, their language, their characters, their values are not of the British or Irish people. They are not the British heritage.

Typically, the tales of the British and Irish people contain no splendid palaces or pretty, elegant fairies; no handsome princes and aspiring peasant brides; no wicked stepmothers and ugly sisters, no noble knights and decorative beldames waiting to be saved; no rich merchants and no bears, camels, dragons or griffins. Everything is popular and from the familiar lore of these islands. Heroes and heroines are as wild, unkempt, simple, hard-working and superstitious as they probably were in fact.

The folk values contain little of the 'natural' virtues of thrift, acquisitiveness and rugged individualism that the people had thrust upon them by the rising middle class; but they do exhibit a strong 'unnatural' sense of cooperation, care and respect for the poor and afflicted, an almost stoical patience and toleration, and an admirable self-deprecating humour that runs through every county.

The tales show little interest in a structured religion. On the contrary, there is an abiding faith in the people and their capabilities in confronting the wonders of everyday life. Not for the people's philosophy a fatalistic pessimism or meek obedience,

[1] Campbell, *op. cit*, p. VIII.

rather an optimistic vision and enduring hope. As Campbell wrote of the Scots tales he faithfully recorded over a century ago, 'Amidst curious rubbish, you will find sound sense if you look for it. You will find the creed of the people, as shown in their stories, to be that wisdom and courage, though weak, may overcome strength, ignorance and pride; that the most despised is often the most worthy; that small beginnings lead to great results.'[1]

Moreover, the language of folktale, unfettered by grammar book, fickle fashion, Transatlantic pressure or Oxford and Cambridge overseer, constitutes the genuine oral poetry of the common people, dating from a time when poet and peasant were one. Nowhere is the intrinsic beauty and wealth of the English language more apparent than in folktale, and nowhere has the language such a versatility of expression.

What is more, the nameless, illiterate band of storytellers, many of them unconscious and unrecognised artists, who spread the tales by word of mouth, never regarded their art, any more than freedom, as being only for a privileged few. That is beyond their comprehension. In that, too, they differ from the 'drawing-room' artists. And if there is one abiding trait within the stories of these pilgrims of hope it is a faith in the coming of a brighter morrow, free from want, injustice and the intolerance of their masters.

Here, then, is a worthy world for their people to explore, to savour, to learn from and take pride in. For in many ways, it is a truer heritage than that long declaimed from school podium and pulpit, in daily tribunes and silvertex tomes.

SOURCES

THE WEST COUNTRY

1. Skillywidden (Somerset and Cornwall) The body of this tale is taken from K. M. Briggs, Ruth L. Tongue, *Folktales of England* (London, Routledge, 1965), pp. 68-73. The first part was, in fact, recorded from Ruth Tongue in September 1963, as she recalled childhood memories of the tradition in Somerset, 1908-1925. Tellers were a farmer near Dunster, an Exmoor blacksmith and a friend from Watchet. The second part, involving Old Nick, was heard from John Ash, carter, at East Lucott, 1941; Mr. Keal, a farmer, on East Lucott Farm, 1941; Mrs. Stenner, cottager, Porlock area, 1944; Walter Badcock, coach driver, Minehead, 1952; Miss Brown of Bessington, 1959.

I have taken the name 'Skillywidden' from Robert Hunt, *Popular Romances of the West of England* (London, Chatto and Windus, 1930), p. 265; from the same source I have taken the Cornish 'fair play is good play' (p. 72) and the rhyme at the end by the Zennor poet Henry Quick (p. 439).

[1] *Ibid.*, p. V.

Bluebuttons=blue cornflowers—elsewhere known as 'blue caps', 'blue bonnets' or 'blue bottles'.

2. The Tulip Pixies (Devon) From V. Day Sharman, *Folk Tales of Devon* (London, Nelson, 1952), pp. 19-22.

3. Lutey and the Merrymaid (Cornwall) The story is taken mainly from W. Bottrell, *Traditions and Hearthside Stories of West Cornwall* (Penzance, 1870), pp. 64-70: 'Droll of the Meremaid', recorded by Bottrell from an old Cornish croll-teller in the middle of the last century—though the story is much older. I have added a few details from Robert Hunt, *Popular Romances of the West of England* (London, Chatto and Windus, 1930), pp. 152-155: 'The Old Man of Cury'.

To give an idea of the Cornish language, I have included the last verse of "Hern", verses on the curing of pilchards, attributed to John Boson of Newlyn, c. 1700; from R. Morton Nance, *A Glossary of Cornish Sea-Words* (Federation of Old Cornwall Societies, 1963), pp. 193-194.

The name *Madgy Figgy* is taken from Robert Hunt, p. 330.

I have borrowed the supper made by Dame Lutey for her husband from the Cornish poet Charles Causley, *Figgie Hobbin* (London, Macmillan, 1970), p. 26. 'Tiddy oggy' is a Cornish pasty: 'tiddy' is the vernacular form of the word 'potato', while 'oggy' is probably derived from the old Cornish word 'hogen', meaning a pork pasty. 'Figgy hobbin' is variously known elsewhere in Britain as 'suety raisin pudding' or 'spotted dick'; 'Hollands' – gin, a grain spirit made in Holland.

4. Jan Coo (Devon) Most of this tale, including the setting of the scene in an old farmhouse of the last century, is taken from W. Crossing, *Tales of the Dartmoor Pixies* (London and Plymouth, 1980), pp. 19-22, 74-78. I have added details from V. Day Sharman, 'The Calling of Jan Coo', pp. 17-19.

5. Jacky-my-Lantern (North Dorset/Wiltshire) The Story comes from K. M. Briggs, *A Dictionary of British Folk-Tales in the English Language* (London, Routledge, 1970), pp. 81-84. It originated about 1920 and is based on the collector's rough notes. Jacky-my-Lantern is the Somerset-Dorset name for a Will-o'-the-Wisp; the Wiltshire downland name is Jack-with-the-Lantern.

6. Cherry of Zennor (Cornwall) The story comes from Robert Hunt, p. 118; it is reproduced in E. S. Hartland, *English Fairy and Other Folk Tales* (London, W. Scott, 1890), pp. 95-104. The terms 'high' and 'low' countries are applied respectively to the hills and the valleys of the country about Towednack and Zennor.

7. The Three Sillies (Devon) This North Devon version of the traditional story comes from W. Weeks, *Devonshire Yarns* (Exeter, Pollard & Co., 1926), pp. 41-47.

I have added at the end an example of a nursery nonsense tale, recounted by M. Shayler who heard it from an old man in Leafield; it is published in K. M. Briggs, *The Folklore of the Cotswolds* (London, B. T. Batsford, 1974), p. 80. 'From Dan to Bairshaiba' (Beersheba) means 'all over the country'.

THE SOUTH EAST

1. The Knucker of Lyminster (Sussex) This traditional Sussex tale is taken from Charles G. Joiner, *The Sussex County Magazine*, 1929, pp. 845-846, as told to the recorder by a man from Toddington whom he met trimming a hedge somewhere near Knucker Hole—a deep pool close to Lyminster Church. There are several such knucker holes in Sussex: 'springs which rise in the flatlands of the South Downs. They keep at one level and are reputed to be bottomless; the water is cold in summer, but never freezes' (Helena Hall, *Dictionary of Sussex Dialect*, 1957). A 'knucker' or 'nucker' is a dragon or water monster; the word is descended from the Anglo-Saxon *nicor* (a water monster) and is mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon epic *Beowulf*. 'Bill'—an implement having a long blade with a concave edge (for cutting); 'tidy old Humphrey'—right old mess.

2. The Sweating Fairies (Sussex) This fairy belief comes from Jacqueline Simpson, *The Folklore of Sussex* (London, B.T. Batsford, 1973), pp. 53-59. It was recorded by the antiquary M. A. Lower as told to him by an old countryman named William Fowington; it was originally published in 1854 and provides us with a vivid example of rural narrative art from well over a century ago.

The term 'fairisees' originates in the Sussex dialect habit of reduplicating plurals, such as 'waspses' or 'ghostses'.

I have tacked on at the end of the story another fairy item from Mrs. Simpson, recorded in the *Sussex County Magazine* of 1952.

3. The Hyter Sprites (Essex) From E. Rainsberry, *Through the Lych Gate* (London, Roundwood, 1969), pp. 19-22. It was told to an old lady in 1860, then told to the recorder in 1909.

Hyter sprites, like the Lincolnshire 'Tiddy Mun', are helpful and good, as opposed to the East Anglian yarthkins, which are sinister earth-spirits.

A 'vuzz-peg' (i. e., furze pig) is a common Essex name for a hedgehog.

4. The Mare's Egg (Sussex) This popular tale of yokels tricking Londoners was told to Arthur Beckett in the early years of this century; see *The Wonderful Weald* (London, Mills and Boon, 1911) and *Spirit of the Downs* (London, Methuen, 1909). It is also recorded in Jacqueline Simpson, pp. 157-158.

WALES

All five Welsh tales are presented in translation from th Welsh while retaining some colour and inflections of the original.

1. The Lady of Llyn y Fan Fach (Carmarthen) I have cobble this beautiful tale together from several sources: John Rhys *Celtic Folklore* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1901), Vol. I pp. 2-13; E. Owen, *Welsh Folklore* (Oswestry, Woodhall-Min shall, 1887), pp. 16-24; W. Jenkyn Thomas, *The Welsh Fairy Book* (Cardiff, Univ. of Wales Press, 1907), pp. 7-17; Linda Barrett Osborne, *Song of the Harp* (Swansea, Christopher Davies, 1975), pp. 50-58. The story dates back a long time and seems to have been first published by the Welsh Manuscript Society at Llandovery in 1861; it was written down from Welsh oral recitations of John Evans, a tiler of Myddfai, David Williams of Morfa who was about ninety years old at the time, and Elizabeth Morgan of Henllys Lodge, who was a native of the same village of Myddfai.

2. Egg-Shell Pottage (Montgomery) This changeling tale comes from E. Owen, pp. 54-55, and was originally published in the *Cambrian Magazine*, Vol. II, pp. 86, 87 (n. d.). Tylwyth Teg is literally the "Fair Family." A Gwr Cyfarwydd is a wise man or wizard. The teller of the story asserts that it was translated almost literally from Welsh, as told by the peasantry.

3. The Legend of Pantannas (Glamorgan) The first part of this tale comes mainly from W. Jenkyn Thomas, pp. 18-24; the second part is from John Rhys, Vol. I, pp. 184-191.

4. Taffy ap Sion and the Fairy Ring (Carmarthen) Despite its similarity to the tale before, I have included this story because of its delightful language and traditions. It is adapted from Wirt Sykes, *British Goblins* (London, Sampson Low, 1880), pp. 75-78. I have added parts from E. S. Hartland, 'Dafydd William Dafydd and the Fairies,' *Folk-Lore Journal*, Vol. VI, 1888, pp. 191-193.

5. The Sunken City of Llyn Bala (Merioneth) The theme of this story is common in several parts of Wales (and, indeed, other countries too). The *South Wales Daily News* of February 15, 1899, places the lake at Crymlyn, said to be the site of the old town of Swansea. However, this story is set in North Wales, at Bala Lake, or Llyn Tegid as it is called in Welsh. This version and several others are given in John Rhys, Vol. II, pp. 405-418. A more literary version is given in Gwyn Jones, *Welsh Legends and Folk-Tales* (London, OUP, 1955), pp. 202-204.

THE MIDLANDS

1. The Clicking Toad (Staffordshire) The bulk of this story is taken from Eric Swift, *Folk Tales of the West Midlands* (London, Thomas Nelson, 1954), pp. 116-120. I have taken the

liberty of including a beginning from Herefordshire (though it is also well known in Staffs.): Ella M. Leather, *The Folk-Lore of Herefordshire* (London, S. R. Publishers, 1970), p. 174; and an ending from the same source, p. 176 (told by W. Colcombe at Weobley, 1909).

2. Tops or Butts? (Herefordshire) Cobbled together from Ella Leather, pp. 165-166, and Eric Swift, pp. 119-123. This is the most common of all the Jack o' Kent stories in the county; the hero is supposed to have lived in the neighbourhood of Kentchurch and Grosmont. The two riddles are in Swift, p. 6. 'Yous't got some pins' means 'you 've got some brains'.

3. The Wise Men of Gotham (Nottinghamshire) The origin of *The Merry Tales of the Wise Men of Gotham*, a village about seven miles south of Nottingham, is said to date from the reign of King John (1199-1216). The King was approaching Gotham on his way to Nottingham when he was confronted by the villagers. They declared that the ground upon which he rode should for ever be a public road. In response the King later sent men to the village to gather evidence against the men of Gotham, intending to punish them. The villagers, however, being forewarned, at once began to do stupid things, so that the King's men would return with the impression that the village was full of fools. They did such silly things as trying to drown an eel in a pond, putting carts on a barn roof to keep the sun off it and attempting to hedge a cuckoo. Through the centuries many tales have evolved of the Gotham fools, of which three are included here. They are taken from Gordon Atkins, *The Merry Tales of the Wise Men of Gotham* (London, Apple Barrell Press, 1973).

The two-line ending comes from John Merrill, *The Midlands. Legends and Folklore* (London, Wayland Publishers, 1974).

4. The Green Ladies of One Tree Hill (Derbyshire/Shropshire). The introduction, setting the Christmas scene in an old Shropshire farm-house, is taken from Charlotte S. Burne, *Shropshire Folk-Lore* (London, Trubner, 1883), pp. 396-409. The remainder—i. e., the story itself—comes from E. Rainsberry, *Through the Lych Gate* (London, Roundwood, 1969), pp. 150-152. It was told on a charabanc tour on a run to Grindleford and the Sheffield moors, by a Derbyshire couple from Baslow in 1935. 'Cryin' the weds' is 'making bets', 'gambling'.

5. The Boogies an' the Salt-Box (Shropshire) This tale, recorded by Miss Jackson in the dialect of the Worthen district, is published in Charlotte S. Burne, pp. 45-48. Miss Jackson recorded the tale from a nursemaid in West Shropshire who used, about the year 1840, to amuse her charges with this story about the Reynolds family. The 'boogie' is, of course, the hobgoblin or mischievous household sprite.

EAST ANGLIA

1. Ghosts in the Fen (Cambridgeshire) From W. H. Barrett, *More Tales from the Fens* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), pp. 99-107. The story is one of Chafer Legge's tales, that old Fen tiger whose capacity for carrying ale was the envy of his companions, according to Mr. Barrett. Chafer Legge, bare-fist fighter, wildfowler and poacher, who died at a ripe old age, had memorised the tales he had heard as a boy while out in the isolated areas of the Fens, crow-scaring or sheep-tending. The cream of the stories in Barrett's two books (the first of which is *Tales from the Fens*, Routledge, 1963) were heard by him on Saturday nights, at the Ship Inn near his home in Brandon Creek.

2. Tom Tit Tot (Suffolk) From Lois A. Fison, *Merry Suffolk* (London, Jarrold & Sons, 1899), pp. 10-17. This English version of Grimm's tale 'Rumpelstiltskin' was originally published by Anna Walter Thomas in 'Suffolk Notes and Queries,' *Ipswich Journal*, 15 January 1878. It was said to have been told to the author as a child by an old servant. The text given here is in West Suffolk dialect.

3. Cap o' Rushes (Suffolk) From the same source as above, pp. 23-29, gathered by Anna Walter Thomas and contributed to 'Suffolk Notes and Queries' of the *Ipswich Journal* (as above). It was published by Andrew Lang in *Longman's Magazine*, Vol. XIII, and in *Folk-Lore*, September 1890.

4. Mary Who Were Afeard o' Nothin' (Norfolk) Abridged from K. M. Briggs, *A Dictionary of British Folk Tales in the English Language* (London, Routledge, 1970), pp. 204-206. It was originally published in Rye, *Recreations of a Norfolk Antiquary*, pp. 22-26, presumably from an oral source.

5. A Cure for a Fairy (Cambridgeshire) From Katharine M. Briggs and Ruth L. Tongue, *Folktales of England* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), pp. 111-112. It was recorded from W. H. Barrett on October 12, 1963, as one of his stock of traditions from the Cambridge Fens.

6. How Oud Polly Gorst Cum Agin (Suffolk) From Lois A. Fison, pp. 51-56. The scene is set in the Widder's House at Banningham.

The rhyme 'The Farm That Pays' is from Fison, p. 43. 'The Budd'—the Parish overseers.

LANCASHIRE

1. The Fairy Funeral From J. Bowker, *Goblin Tales of Lancashire* (London, 1883), pp. 83-96; 'passin' bell'—funeral bell; 'th' resurrectioners'—the grave robbers (corps stealers).

2. Old Nancy and the Silver Token From J. Bowker, pp. 129-130.

3. The Headless Woman From J. Bowker, pp. 131-139. This tale is also known as *The Boggart Beawt Heeod.*

4. The Lancashire Witches From J. Harland and T. T. Wilkinson, *Lancashire Legends, Traditions, etc.* (Manchester, Meywood, 1873), pp. 248-251, 253-254. 'Coal staff'—long stick for pulling coal from the coal store.

YORKSHIRE AND LINCOLNSHIRE

1. The Flaycrow (West Yorkshire) From S. Baring-Gould, *Yorkshire Oddities, Incidents and Strange Events* (London, Methuen, 1900, 5th Edition), pp. 232-235.

Yorkshire has an almost inexhaustible store of customs, tradition and folk lore stemming from almost every town, village, mountain, dale and moor. And, in keeping with England's largest county (though nowadays Yorkshire is, in truth, three counties) the dialect differs considerably from one part to another. The pronunciation in the dialect has, on the whole, been preserved in all its purity from Anglo-Saxon times and from Norse occupation. In many cases, the Yorkshire dialect is simply a more phonetic way of pronunciation. For instance, a Yorkshireman pronounces such words as father, warm and warn according to their spelling—i. e., in the same way of gather, farm and darn.

In this tale from the West Riding (now West Yorkshire) a 'flaycrow' is a 'scarecrow'.

2. The Boggart of Hellen Pot (West Yorkshire) Another tale from the West Yorkshire moors, between Malham Tarn and Settle. From Baring-Gould, pp. 326-339, abridged. First published in *Once a Week*, March, 1867.

I have inserted the old manner of a Yorkshire moorland shepherd counting his sheep, from Arnold Crowther, *Yorkshire Customs, Traditions and Folk Lore of Old Yorkshire* (Leeds, Dalesman Books, 1977), p. 13. According to Richard Blakeborough, *Wit, Character, Folklore and Customs of the North Riding of Yorkshire* (Wakefield, EP Publishing, 1898), p. 259, some Yorkshire children recently used to count in games: ena, tena, tethra, pethra, pimps, sarfra, larfra, ofra, dofra, dix (for one to ten).

As is evident from the narrator's conversation with the farmer, the genuine 'type' is a slow, cautious person, not given to rushing things.

3. A Pottle o' Brains (Lincolnshire) From M. C. Balfour, *Legends of the Lincolnshire Cars, Folk-Lore*, Vol. II, June 1891, No. 11, pp. 165-170.

Most of Mrs. Balfour's tales come from the area of Lindsey,

where the Fens give way to the Cars, which were once wide swamps bordering on the course of a small stream. Here, according to the folk-tale collector, the people's speech sounds strange to a modern English ear, for it is almost pure Saxon, and keeps many of the original inflexions which most of England has lost. Certainly it bears signs of the many races that have dwelt in Lincolnshire, and surely no county in England has known more varied masters; there are many Norse and Danish words, and some Roman and Norman names; but in the common speech, French and Latin derivatives are conspicuous by their absence.

4. The Bargest of Grassington (West Yorkshire) From T. Parkinson, *Yorkshire Legends and Traditions* (London, 1888), Vol. I, pp. 129-131. It was originally published by Joseph Lucas in his 'Studies in Nidderdale,' *Leeds Mercury Supplement*, February 28, 1881.

The well-known Yorkshire toast given at the end is taken from Arnold Crowther, p. 11.

5. Mother Shipton (North Yorkshire) From H. L. Gee, *Folk Tales of Yorkshire* (London, Thomas Nelson, 1952), pp. 104-108, and T. Parkinson, pp. 158-166.

Few names of Yorkshire celebrities have gained more wide notoriety than that of Mother Shipton (after whom several public houses are named, including in my home town of Portsmouth in Hampshire, some 400 miles from Knaresborough where she was said to have been born). We first read of her in a book by Richard Head published in 1684, some 130 years after her death. No doubt many of the prophesies attributed to her, as in the verses quoted, were actually added in more recent times.

6. Tiddy Mun (Lincolnshire) From M. C. Balfour, pp. 149-156. Mrs. Balfour writes that 'I fear I cannot preserve the rude poetry and grace of the vernacular; but I tell these stories of the Cars of the Ancholme Valley exactly as told to me, lest in altering I might spoil them. I heard this tale from an aged woman, a life-long dweller in these Cars, who in her young days herself observed the rite she describes... To her, Tiddy Mun (The Little Man) was a perfect reality, and one to be loved as well as feared.'

It is worthy of note that the Ancholme level was drained and the New River made, mainly by Dutch labourers, in 1767. 'Closin's' means 'enclosed land'.

NORTH EAST

1. The Hedley Kow (Durham) From J. William Brockie, *Legends and Superstitions of the County of Durham* (Sunderland, 1886), pp. 35-39; and Joseph Jacobs, *English Fairy Tales* (London, The Bodley Head, 1968), pp. 178-180. Mr. Brockie wryly remarks that 'since the introduction of total abstinence societies into the regions watered by the Team and Derwent,

the appearances of the Hedley Kow have been much fewer and further between.'

The rhyme at the end is from S. Baring-Gould, *Yorkshire Oddities, Incidents and Strange Events* (London, Methuen, 1900, 5th Edition; originally published in 1875), p. 171. The author also has some interesting information on the Hedley Kow (p. 234).

2. **The Magic Ointment** (Northumberland) From Frederick Grice, *Folk Tales of the North Country* (London, Thomas Nelson, 1944), pp. 1-6. 'A supple Tam'—a soft cap.

SCOTLAND

1. **The Selkie Wife** (Orkney) From W. Traill Dennison in *Scottish Antiquary*, VII (1892), pp. 173-176 ('The Goodman of Wastness'); G. F. Black in *County Folk-Lore*, III (1903), pp. 173-175 ('The Goodwife of Wastness'). In the second source, the tale was recorded from a native of Ronaldsay.

Orkey is separated from John o' Groats on the northern margin of the Scottish mainland by seven miles of stormy sea; it consists of the Mainland and several small islands. It was colonised by the Norwegians, bringing their language, customs and tales, in the 8th century, and was annexed to Scotland in 1471. Although the older language of the islands, the Norn, died out during the 17th century, many of its speech forms and words are still in everyday use, as also is the Norse. This is not so evident in this first tale, but is certainly so with 'The Selkie that deud no' forget'.

The Orkneys, with their storms and calms, whirlpools and tideways, skerries and caves, give harbour to many mysterious folk: sea horses and dragons, the sinister Fin Man, the lovely selkie and mermaid. The seal body of the selkie was thought to contain a human soul, usually of a drowned person.

At the end of this tale I have added a verse of Scottish from Strathnaver on the northern coast (from Alan Temperley, *Tales of the North Coast*, The Research Publishing Company, London, 1977, p. 98).

2. **The Wee Bunnock** (Ayrshire) From Robert Chambers, *The Popular Rhymes of Scotland* (2nd Edition, Edinburgh, W. & R. Chambers, 1870), pp. 82-85. It is from the manuscript of an old man who spent his early years in the parish of Symington in Ayrshire; it was one of the great stores of similar legends possessed by his grandmother, and which she would relate as she sat spinning at the fireside, with the youngsters clustered about her. The grandmother lived from 1704 to 1789.

The story, which I have abridged slightly (adding the rhymes from a Dumfriesshire variant of the tale), provides us with a subtle characterisation of the various occupations carried on in the old days in Ayrshire.

3. The Black Bull of Norroway (Lowlands, general) Cobbled together from several sources, the basic being Robert Chambers, pp. 95-101. I have also consulted Ruth Manning-Sanders, *Scottish Folk Tales* (London, Methuen, 1976), pp. 52-68; N. and W. Montgomerie, *The Well at World's End* (London, Bodley Head, 1975), pp. 60-65.

The language of this tale, as of the other Scottish stories contained here (excluding the two Orkney tales) is the simple, spoken Scots of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is possible that 'Norroway' in the title refers to Norway.

4. Nurse Kind and Ne'er Want (Galloway) Mainly from Hannah Aitken (ed.), *A Forgotten Heritage* (Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1974), pp. 14-15 (both 'Nurse Kind and Ne'er Want' and 'A Back-Gaen Wean').

I have added the first sentence from Robert Chambers and the final two verses from Duncan Fraser, *Glen of the Rowan Trees* (Montrose, Standard Press, 1978). The verses are taken from Arabella Ogilvie's *Wille Wabster's Wooing and Wedding on the Grampian Mountains*, 1868, telling of a glensman chased through peat bogs and over the moor by a brawny witch who wanted to marry him. It is recounted by an old grannie sitting by her fireside, sadly contrasting the emptiness of the 1860s with the bustling scenes of her childhood, before the crofters were driven from their cottagers by the lairds.

The basic tale comes from Nithsdale; its source being R. H. Cromek, *Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song*.

5. The Paddo (Dumfriesshire) From Robert Chambers, pp. 87-89. The collector tells us that the story is from the memory of Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe who heard it from his nurse Jenny at his father's house of Hoddam about the year 1784.

6. The Wal at the Warld's End (Fife) Assembled from various sources, but mainly from Robert Chambers, pp. 105-107. Also from Winifred Finlay, *Tattercoats and Other Folk Tales* (London, Kaye and Ward, 1976), pp. 78-86 (as 'The Three Golden Heads'); J. F. Campbell, *Popular Tales of the West Highlands* (3 vols., Paisly, Alexander Gardner, 1890-1893), Vol. II, pp. 140-145; Ruth Manning-Sanders, pp. 40-43; N. and W. Montgomerie, pp. 15-18.

This weird tale is of great antiquity; a tale of the 'Wolf of the Warldis End' (*wolf* being probably a misprint for *well*) is mentioned in the *Complaynt of Scotland*, 1548. Muir o'Hacklepins—Moor of Comb's Teeth (Sharp Thorns).

7. The Selkie that Deud No' Forget (Orkney) From Ernest W. Marwick, *The Folklore of Orkney and Shetland* (London, Batsford, 1975), pp. 152-156. This is another tale in the collection of Walter Traill Dennison which he obtained from the cottars and fishermen; most he turned into English for the benefit of a wider public; but this is a magnificent exception in that

it is an example of Orkney speech and a faithful transcription of the story as told by some old man or woman by the fireside. I have left it almost completely in the original dialect.

ISLE OF MAN

1. Nikessen's Pool From Kathleen Killip, *Twisting the Rope and Other Folktales from the Isle of Man* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1980), pp. 105-113. Hollantide—on the 12th of November was Hollantide Fair; 'Kebeg' is old man call to bring home the calves; 'Ayns ennym y Jee as y Vac as y Spyrryd Noa'—In the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

2. Billy Beg, Tom Beg and the Fairies From Sophia Morrison in *Folk-Lore*, Vol. XIX, 1908, pp. 324-327.

Miss Morrison tells us that she picked the tale up from an old man two years before (1906). He had heard it in his youth on board his herring lugger from an old Manxman. The author wrote down the yarn first in Manx, then turned it into English. It bears some resemblance to an Irish story of Croker's, but here it is the invocation of 'Sunday' which does the damage. In Manx mythology, fairies cannot bear the sound of holy names; or, to put it another way, the early Christian invaders put the fear of God into the common folk so as to drive out their 'pagan' beliefs.

IRELAND

1. Thomas Connolly and the Banshee (Dublin) From W. B. Yeats (ed.), *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* (London, Scott, 1888), pp. 108-112.

An English translation of tales told by the traditional Irish storytellers gives but a pale shadow of the original Irish narration. Nonetheless, the collection put together by the Irish poet Yeats offers some idea of the unique flavour of tales told by the Irish people.

This tale was collected by J. Todhunter in the mid-nineteenth century.

The banshee (from *ban–bean*—a woman, and *shee–sidhe*—a fairy) is an attendant fairy that follows the old families, and none but them, and wails before a death.

'Axy Nomo' (*Lat.*)—Esse Homo (Behold the Man).

2. Mary Hogan's Leprechaun (Cork) From Thomas Keightley, *The Fairy Mythology* (London, 1860), pp. 376-378 (as 'The Leprechaun in the Garden').

Leprechaun is from the Irish *leith bhrogan*=the one-shoemaker (hence brogue). He is generally seen working at a single shoe.

3. Teig O'Kane and the Corpse (Leitrim) From W. B. Yeats, pp. 16-31, as 'Teig O'Kane (Tadhg O Cáthán) and the Corpse'. I have abridged it quite considerably. It was originally collected and translated by Douglas Hyde, and published in his *Leabhar Sgeulaigheachta* (Dublin, Gill, 1890).

4. The White Trout (Galway) From W. B. Yeats, pp. 35-38. This is a legend of Cong, originally collected by S. Lover. These trout stories are common all over Ireland. Many holy wells are haunted by such blessed trout. The trout, of course, actually has a red spot on its side. The 'go to your duty reg'lar' reference is to attendance at the confessional.

5. The Servant Boy and the Farmer (Limerick) From Kevin Danaher, *Folktales of the Irish Countryside* (Cork, the Mercier Press, 1967), pp. 28-32. Danaher tells us that when he was a child in County Limerick in the 1920s the ancient art of story-telling was already dying out. But still there were old people who knew the old stories; one such person, the narrator of this tale, was an elderly farmer named Thomas Moran of Parkana, 'a broad-shouldered thickset man who loved to tell of ghosts and fairies and monsters which made us shiver delightfully in our shoes'.

I have added the first paragraph from Sean O'Sullivan, *Folktales of Ireland* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 184.

6. Lusmore the Humpback (Tipperary) From W. B. Yeats, pp. 40-45, as 'The Legend of Knockgrafton.' One of several stories included by Yeats from the rich store of T. Crofton Croker, collected in the early part of the last century.

This story is reminiscent of the Manx tale 'Billy Beg, Tom Beg and the Fairies'.

7. Tom Fitzpatrick and the Leprechaun (Kildare) Mainly from Thomas Keightley, pp. 373-375 ('Clever Tom and the Leprechaun'), with additions from Sean O'Sullivan, pp. 179-181 ('The Three Laughs of the Leipreachan'), and T. Crofton Croker, *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland* (ed. Wright), pp. 135-139, as 'The Field of Boliauns.'

It is a traditional belief of the Irish peasantry that the Danes used to make beer out of the heath; it was also a popular belief that the Danes keep up their claim on Ireland, and that a Danish father, when marrying his daughter, gives her a portion of the Emerald Isle (Ireland).

'Bolyawn buies' – yellow ragweeds.

GYPSY TALES

1. Mossycoat From Katharine M. Briggs and Ruth L. Tongue, *Folktales of England* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), pp. 16-26. It was collected by T. W. Thompson from the gypsy Taimie Boswell at Oswaldwhistle, Northumberland on January 9, 1915.

The Gypsy tales, besides providing the rich and fascinating language and lore of the Gypsies, also give valuable evidence of the survival in English oral tradition of some international tales not otherwise known in this country.

This story is reminiscent of the East Anglian 'Cap o' Rushes', but it contains important variations coloured by the traveling person's outlook—e. g., the rooted distrust of servants, the pedlar wooer, the technique of gypsies and tinkers in going to the front door of big houses to see the mistress of the house, and the mother's provision of clothes for children.

I have somewhat abridged the story.

2. The Liddle Dunk Foal From Katharine Briggs, *A Dictionary of British Folk in the English Language* (London, Routledge, 1970), pp. 377-378. Originally published in Ruth L. Tongue, 'Somerset Folklore,' *County Folklore*, Vol. VIII, Folk-Lore Society, 1965, pp. 55-56. It was collected from an old Exmoor gypsy woman in 1936.

The sign of the cross on a donkey's back protects it from witchcraft; similarly, a Sunday-born child is safe from evil spirits, and so are things relating to the magic number seven.

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